



TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH Open Space Committee

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By Andrew T. Dowd, Town Clerk at 2:42 pm, Sep 14, 2023

**Open Space Committee
Zoom Meeting Minutes
January 23, 2023
Approved July 24, 2023**

Pursuant to Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022, An Act Relative to Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency, signed into law on July 16, 2022, this meeting was conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance by members of the public was permitted.

Members in attendance (remotely): John Campbell, Chair; Brian Belfer; Bill Pierce; Dan Clark; Leslie Harrison; Paul Tagliaferri

Members absent: Scott Rogers; Ashley Davies

Others in attendance (Remotely): Vincent Vignaly, Conservation Agent

The Chair opened the meeting at 7pm.

CPA Project Update on Senior Center ADA Accessible Trail; Any New information—Mr. Belfer was not aware of any new information, he had attended the first CPC public hearing but not the second. The DPW Director presented at both hearings. Mr. Campbell recalled there were beneficial changes made to the trail. Ms. Harrison remembered that part of the trail was rerouted because of the terrain. Members expressed their continued support of this project.

CPA Project Update on Aqueduct Multi-Use Trail Feasibility Study: Discussion on MWRA Approval—Mr. Campbell provided an update on behalf of Ms. Davies. The MWRA was pushing back on the Town's request to change the surface of the trail to comply with ADA requirements, which is part of the proposed scope that would be in the feasibility study.

Mr. Vignaly said he and the Planning Director have had conversations with the MWRA representative regarding the surfacing. He said he needed to have discussions on his end before committing. Mr. Campbell thought that information should be brought forth to the CPC in the form of a memo from Open Space, as the entity sponsoring the application. Mr. Vignaly will provide a summary before the next CPC meeting.

Mr. Campbell said the scope of work provided by Waterman Design included much more information for the study than the prior application. It is still a viable project, but he questioned the timing if there are outstanding questions of what will be allowed on the aqueduct.

Mr. Tagliaferri asked for clarification on the issue. Mr. Vignaly said since the MWRA owns the land area, the town needs to get their agreement/support for the project. The MWRA has not previously allowed paving or stone dust in large sections over the Aqueduct but they are now considering allowing it. They have been very conservative in the past so they might be willing to relax if the construction can be done in a manner that will protect their priorities. It's a possibility, and the MWRA contact was going to go back and put it before their operations staff to ask that question.

Mr. Tagliaferri wanted to confirm that it was just for the section that's owned by the MWRA, which is the Aqueduct. Mr. Campbell said that it is the entire trail from the Marlboro town line to the Berlin line. In

his opinion, one of the main features of a multi-use trail is that it would have a surface that could be used with bicycles, strollers, wheelchairs, etc., and that is what is being questioned here. Another part of this project was going to address the crossings and trail connections in Town, but the MWRA was not opposed to surfacing short stretches at the crossings and trail connections. Mr. Campbell questioned whether it was a viable project if the surfaces were different and did not support consistent uses.

Mr. Vignaly confirmed that the MWRA was agreeable to having the bridge surface at the Hudson Street aqueduct bridge updated. Mr. Campbell said that project is moving into the next phase and going through the contract process.

CPA Project Update on Conservation Fund, Discussion on Priority vs. Other CPA applications—

An application for \$77K was submitted (the minimum 10% required to be designated for Open Space) in order to keep funding the Conservation Fund. The goal is to bring that fund towards or over \$1M. He believed it was this committee's third priority project. They will make the case for funding again but know there are limited resources. Open Space supports the first two projects more strongly.

Outreach Plan for Northborough Landowners Regarding Conservation, Update List and Options—

Mr. Vignaly shared and the committee reviewed the 'OSC-Landowner Outreach' spreadsheet. Actions taken are as follows:

- 0 Bartlett Street, Map 51 Parcel 3/Map 66 Parcel 16—HOLD. Currently in litigation.
- 255 Brigham Street—HOLD. This 9.5 acre property is in an otherwise residential area except for the golf course. Mr. Campbell didn't see this property fitting their mission. Mr. Tagliaferri suggested sending a letter to the Owner to gauge interest in a conservation restriction. Mr. Pierce agreed that without the other Brigham Street properties just discussed, acquisition didn't make sense on its own.
- 55 Cherry Street—UPDATE. Mr. Campbell recalled some interest as this abuts or continues the existing trail areas around Cold Harbor.
- 302 Church Street—UPDATE. Property ownership of this property was not clear. Mr. Vignaly will contact the Assessor's Office to see who receives bills for the property.
- 0 Crawford Street, Fidrych property—UPDATE. Mr. Vignaly will verify record owner contact info.
- 0 Crawford Street, Zecco properties—UPDATE. Mr. Vignaly will verify record owner contact info.
- 242 Green Street—UPDATE. There's been an interest in pursuing whether the owner would agree to either sell a portion or grant a conservation restriction that would allow a strip to connect the trail from Mount Pisgah down to Green Street and to connect to the Green Street Trail area. Todd Helwig, Conservation Commission member, had reached out to the Owner several years ago but there was no interest then. Mr. Campbell will reach out to Mr. Helwig to see if he's had any communication since.
- 522 Green Street, Rear—HOLD. Mr. Belfer will reach out to Berlin's Conservation Department, he wasn't sure why this property was on the list.
- Howard Street—UPDATE. All of the properties listed on the spreadsheet will be sent a letter.
- 90 Maynard Street—UPDATE. Ms. Davies last reached out to the owners in 2018, she was tasked with contacting them for an update. In the past, the property owners indicated that they have three daughters they want to include in the decision-making for the property.
- Various West Main Street Priorities—UPDATE. New contact info is needed. Mr. Belfer felt that the former Conservation Agent had these properties listed so that at some point they could pursue some connectivity to access the DCR land and the other green space that's behind Bigelow's. He didn't think there was ever any interest in buying any of Bigelow's land, and he didn't think Bigelow's had interest in reducing their acreage. Ms. Harrison thought the plan was to purchase development rights to prevent it from being developed. Mr. Clark's recollection was that the Town was trying to get an easement.
- 77 West Main Street—UPDATE. Standard letter to be sent.
- 432 Whitney Street—HOLD.

Mr. Belfer asked to have 125 Rice Ave added to the list. He will reach out to the property owner.

Mr. Campbell said they will have another focused discussion and fine-tune their actions at an upcoming meeting.

Other Action Items to Support the Master Plan: Review Open Space Related Goals—Mr. Campbell said that, if there were no objections, he was going to recommend this agenda item be carried forward. It would be better to have Mr. Rogers and Ms. Davies present.

Other Business as May Legally Come Before the Committee—Ms. Harrison mentioned the passing of Bill Rawstron. Discussion followed. Mr. Belfer will reach out to his son for an address, Ms. Harrison will coordinate the Committee actions to send a sympathy card to his family.

Consideration of November 28, 2022 Minutes for Acceptance—Ms. Harrison made a motion to accept the minutes as submitted. Mr. Belfer seconded the motion. Mr. Tagliaferri abstained, he was not present at that meeting. The minutes were approved 5-0.

Next Meeting Date—The next meeting is scheduled for March 20.

Mr. Belfer made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Harrison seconded. All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:49pm.

Respectively Submitted by
Michelle Cilley, Board Secretary