

Yarmouth Parks and Lands
Meeting minutes
Jan. 19, 2022

Committee members:

Karyn MacNeill, YCS Director
Tim Shannon, Council Liaison- abs.
Erik Donohoe, Parks Specialist

Mary Thorp (2022)
Ron Dupuis (2024)
Vance Brown (2023)
Ebrahim Fazeli (2023)
Lisa Small (2022)
Vacancy (2024)
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Guests: Josh Royte, Scott Hanson, Barbara Saint-Amour

Ron calls the meeting to order at 6:06 pm.
Acceptance of Dec. 1, 2021 minutes. Vance motions, Lisa seconds, unanimous.

Erik updates:

An abutter would like dogs allowed in Riverfront Woods. Perhaps in winter?
The conservation easement allows the town to decide. Eb asks if we need to act on this and make a recommendation to council. Tim says that council listens to PLC.
Mary states that this is one of the only parcels without dogs and that the management plan already addressed this.
Lisa states that this is a “preserve” and is concerned about dogs altering the natural landscape and interfering with other species. Would like to see the term “preserve” defined with some dos and don’ts.
Josh agrees that dogs should not be allowed and that if you allow it, you can never go back.
Ron feels we should stay with the plan and Vance sees no reason to change it.
Tim suggests that Erik and Karyn formulate a response in the short term.

Appointments and Nominations:

Mary agrees to continue as secretary IF the council finally appoints 2 more PLC members so we can reasonable be assured of a quorum if someone is unable to attend. Tim promises to look into this.
Ron Dupuis is nominated for chair by Lisa and seconded by Mary. Unanimous.

More Updates:

Erik tells of Boy Scout Matthew’s Eagle project with the mapping of habitats in Yarmouth and a descriptive story slide show. He is very impressed with the work.
Mary announces that Matthew has submitted it to the BS Council and is awaiting his board of review.

Erik mentions GIS mapping of invasives. FKF, Sligo, and Sweetser are the areas of most concern. We need a prioritization of the invasive plan. Work is being done at Pratt's with the buckthorn. The final section of Westside Trail has received a program grant to kick off the fund-raising efforts.

Karyn Updates:

Stresses that there are several intense projects coming up for votes.

Railroad Square: Karyn says that when public spaces get included, long term maintenance need to be addressed. There may be a walking trail loop included.

Vance asks if it would tie into the possible Rail Trail and asks when do we have to weight in.

Josh mentions 3rd party easements and Eb is concerned about the aesthetics if too much is crammed into a small space. Mary found the plan confusing and promises to review it more carefully for the next meeting.

Lisa wants us to think about the ratio of "green" space to "built" space.

Josh asks where is the open space? Where are trees? Will it allow the passage of people AND wildlife? Connections are important.

UL feels this development is viewed in the context of the Main St. plan- commercial and pedestrian friendly.

Josh reiterates that one can have high density and still have trees and wildlife.

Eb asks about impact fees.

Tim explains that usually impact fees are generally for costs imposed on the town by development. ie. school dept. costs, open space lost. Council is currently looking at several options that Erin (town planner) presented.

Ice Arena expansion: Karyn asks us to all look at the proposal again.

Sign Updates:

Lisa mentions another type of sign that might be acceptable. Ex. 4X4 post with flag style sign. Rustic. Asks us to look at the sign at the Royal River Conservation Trust on North Rd.

Karyn reports the efforts by a "branding" committee in town. Says that she will have updates from the committee by the end of March.

Vance reiterates that durability is key. Not just aesthetics.

Frank Knight Management Plan:

Erik- a beginning plan was sent out to start discussion. Basically broad concepts. Mapping needs to be done.

Karyn wants to recognize the connectivity. Eb concurs.

Tim- is it a preserve? Lisa- or more of a forest?

Josh Royte talks about the different wetland crossings and the need to manage the front of the property nearest to the community garden.

Lisa stresses the need to permanently protect the area. Erik says the surveys unanimously supported protection.

Vance wants to know about the plan for trail delineations and maintenance. Erik agrees that several areas need to be mapped better to clear up confusion. Josh mentions permissive concepts. Need to recognize fears about imminent domain. Must resolve this before putting it out to the public. Scott Hanson (an abutter from the Bluffs) feels that most Bluff residents are happy using and sharing the forest. Eb is willing to help editing the FKF plan and asks if there is a hard deadline Erik confirms there is NOT. Erik would like to meet with abutters and asks for PLC members to help.

Tree Update:

Lisa mentions that resolution that Karen Massey wrote and sent to Council. She is happy to state that Council has made the Tree Committee an official committee and hopes that they will back a tree warden position. Again stresses the threat that the Emerald Ash Borer represents.

Work Plan:

Karyn will forward last year's plan and states that we all need to look and access it. It will be an agenda item for next month.

Other:

Mary asks about Soci- still in limbo. Vance would like to see some formal education about impact fees. All agree that Tim and Erin need to be part of that discussion.

Eb motions to adjourn. Vance seconds. Unanimous at 7:50 pm.