

Yarmouth Parks & Lands Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Date: March 7, 2018

Time: 5:30 – 7:30pm – weather related change

Monthly meeting

Town Hall, Community Room

*To advise the Town Council, staff, boards, committees, and the public concerning the funding, acquisition, management, use, and disposition of town lands needed to implement the parks, trails, pedestrian easements, and open-space goals of the community; and to engage the town and public in stewardship, protection, and uses of the natural environment and ecosystems of Yarmouth through public education, shared responsibility and personal experience, and connection to the lands and waters of Yarmouth.*

Chair:

Notes taken by:

Committee members 2018:

Karen Massey (2018)

Mary Webber (2018)

Lisa Small (2019)

Mary Thorp (2019)

Jay Waterman (2019), excused

Richard Brimberg (2020)

Vacancy (2020)

Town Council, Staff & Guests:

Karyn MacNeill, YCS Director

David Craig, Council Liaison - excused

Beth Sturtevant, RRCT Board

Alan Stearns, RRCT Exec. Dir

Josh Royte, Open Spaces advocacy

Ed Ashley, Open Spaces advocacy

**MINUTES**

- 5:35pm - Call to Order
  - Introductions and welcome for guests and members
  - Acceptance of December 2017 and January 2018 Minutes – motion made by Mary W., 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mary T. Unanimously accepted.
  - Electing PLC Chair and Secretary – Nomination of Jay Waterman by Mary W., 2<sup>nd</sup> by Karen. Unanimously approved. Mary W. self-nominated. Unanimously approved.
  - Town Council Rules discussion. Karyn presented the newly updated rules for Volunteer Committees. The PLC asked if the Town Council (TC) will ask for a FY calendar or an Annual calendar, regarding the committee’s work plan. The PLC discussed how this might affect a CIP discussion. Some members of the PLC were concerned with the obligation of the TC when PLC completed and presented a work plan agenda item. Another conversation item included how the TC’s input might alter or guide the creation of a PLC workplan. PLC members agreed that it is important to get TC ideas and thoughts BEFORE designing a workplan to present for approval.
  - Land Steward Position update – presented by Karyn MacNeill. The Town and YCS explored an option through the Maine Conservation Corps (MCC), but their numbers of applicants and the AmeriCorps regulations eliminated Yarmouth as a host Community. YCS has presented a FY 2018-2019 budget that includes a full-time position through the Parks Division of YCS for a “Parks Specialist” by combining a vacancy and partial costs of the former RRCT contract. PLC has received the proposed job description in a previous meeting and no comments were received. If approved, YCS will go ahead with filling this position at its first available opportunity.
  - Karyn updated the PLC that the CPIC meeting to bring YCS and PLC to their table is scheduled for Tuesday, March 13. Karyn will be present at the table and will ask Jay to accompany her. Any and all PLC members are invited.

- Riverfront Woods Preserve Conservation Easement (CE) Draft discussion
  - Karyn, Lisa and Mary W. met on Friday, March 9 to discuss many of the topics in the CE. Lisa and Mary shared thoughts on The Nature Conservancy's "Preserve Use Policies." Discussion included the information shared by Lisa.
  - Alan Sterns shared a reminder that PLC might consider the items that are placed in a management plan versus a CE.
  - PLC discussion included eliminating uses such as hunting, trapping, snowmobiles, horseback, etc.
  - Alan suggested that the PLC create a "vision statement" for this parcel and include language that might say, "Except for regional connectors, trails are primitive."
  - Many agreed that the intention of this property is to be more primitive.
  - Beth Sturtevant suggested a working sub-group to tackle the language of a CE for Riverfront Woods Preserve (RWP) and include Barker in the conversation.
  - Lisa wants to ensure some level of protections of the property.
  - Alan commented that a Forest Management Plan might allow for one type of protections. Also commented that there are laws to protect specific habitats, but this property could "do better" than the basic natural resource values.
  - Karen Massey reminded the group that if RWP doesn't stay primitive, the Town might not have another place in Yarmouth that is more primitive.
  - Karyn MacNeill suggested that this discussion is opened to other stakeholders for more transparency.
  - Alan reminded the PLC there is a deadline for the CE development and the closing on the property. Regarding Land for Maine's Future funding, Alan stated that "only current democracy can prohibit actions" – like hunting and trapping. (Referring to the Town/Local ordinances.) Alan also added that the CE can expressly allow for activities like Hunting and Trapping, and identify current or future local ordinances by stating "except with a restriction by local government."
  - Mary W. commented that dogs are not considered low-impact in a property like this one.
  - Alan suggested leaving dogs out of the CE.
  - Mary Thorp suggested a motion, that PLC "authorizes a subcommittee of two (2) PLC members to work with Royal River Conservation Trust to design a draft Conservation Easement for property known as Riverfront Woods Preserve." Richard 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, and it passed unanimously. Mary W. and Lisa will serve as PLC reps on this subcommittee. Beth Sturtevant as RRCT board member and RWP neighbor will also lead this group. Beth will set up first meeting.
- Open Space sub group presentation and updates, Ed Ashley/Josh Royte
  - Josh Royte offered to move this process ahead how ever is best for the project. The ideal outcome for tonight is to update the PLC, share ideas, and hear recommendations.
  - Josh shared the current working group: Jamie Carter, Jill Piker, Lisa Small, Karen Massey, Josh Royte, Ed Ashley, Susan Prescott, and Dan Ostrye.
  - Josh provided the PLC with the following information:
    - his professional and volunteer background;
    - History of previous Town reports that support Open Space;
    - This group's hope to complete a once titled, "Green Infrastructure Plan" (GIP) as stated in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan;

- Current GIS layers include the Parcel Prioritization reports, habitat locations, water access, and many more details of parks and open spaces;
  - The next step suggested would be to come up with an overall plan that includes agricultural, social, recreational, open space, forests, parks, street trees, and more details to complete an Open Space Plan for Yarmouth.
  - The working group would like to have PLC support, work in coordination with RRCT, and complete the project with Planning Board and TC buy-in.
  - Ed shared that the initial plan, the GIP was started in 2009 as part of the 2010 Comp Plan process, but the GIP was shelved.
  - Karen Massey moved that the PLC create an Open Space Task Force to develop an open space plan and include at least one PLC member. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mary T. Unanimously approved.
  - Josh will move ahead with scheduling future meetings, updating the PLC, and including anyone interested in participating.
- 7:26pm - Motion to Adjourn by Mary W, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mary T. Unanimous acceptance.

**Important upcoming dates:**

**4/4/2018 – PLC Monthly Meeting**

**5/2/2018 – PLC Monthly Meeting**