

Open Space & Recreation Plan Committee (OSRPC) Meeting Minutes

September 3, 2024, a public hybrid meeting in the Collins Room

* Action items and votes¹ below in bold face

- At 6:30 PM, Rosa opened the meeting. Roll call, introductions, salute the flag.

Present: (In person): John Bartlett, Jack Bowen, Marlies Henderson, Mike Parker, Mike Rosa, Darlene Torre, Grace Tucci
Excused: John Bartlett
Zoom: Justin Damon
Staff: (In person): Kat Malgieri
Public: Andrew Jennings, Mike Tucci

1) Reorganization:

Parker moves to nominate Rosa for *Chair*, seconded by Bowen: unanimous favorable vote 7-0-0.
Parker moves to close nominations, seconded by Torre: unanimous favorable vote 7-0-0. Torre moves to appoint Rosa as Chair, seconded by Parker: unanimous favorable vote 7-0-0.

Henderson moves to nominate Bartlett for *Vice Chair*, seconded by Parker: unanimous favorable vote 7-0-0. Henderson moves to close nominations, seconded by Bowen: unanimous favorable vote 7-0-0. Henderson moves to appoint Bartlett as Vice Chair, seconded by Parker: unanimous favorable vote 7-0-0.

Parker moves to nominate Henderson for *Secretary*, seconded by Bowen: unanimous favorable vote. Torre moves to close nominations, seconded by Bowen: unanimous favorable vote 7-0-0. Torre moves to appoint Henderson as Secretary, seconded by Bowen: unanimous favorable vote 7-0-0.

2) Open mic: Andrew Jennings mentions Complete Streets update. The deadline for comments was August 1. Shouldn't this DPW Engineering document have been reviewed by OSRPC? Pedestrian, bicycle, transit access to recreation resources. **Henderson** will pursue this.

Dina Favreau asks for protection of town-owned properties on Stony Drive. The parcels used to be owned by her family. She wishes to see the riverfront parcel(s) protected for the enjoyment of the public. Malgieri has the lot numbers. **Henderson** will pursue this.

3) Rosa asks that the 7/9 minutes be amended to show what changes were made for the 11th edit (5.4.3). Bowen moves to accept the 7/9 minutes as amended. Parker seconds. In favor: Bowen, Henderson, Parker, Rosa. Abstain: Damon, Torre, Tucci (4-0-3).

4) Malgieri conveys that the Consultant hasn't yet heard from the state. It is taking longer than usual. Some speculation follows as to what causes the delay (our draft plan was submitted at PARC grant annual deadline). Review letters from PB, SB and NMCOG are in. BCC, Rec Comm, YDBP and RSC to follow shortly.

5) Henderson reports on an unofficial 8/13 thru-hike with Amber Stearns (AMC Bay Circuit), Bruce Shick (Tewksbury Open Space) and Jane Cairns (Andover Trails). They successfully hiked 18 miles

¹ In favor – opposed - abstain

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from High Plain Road in Andover to Orchard Road in Bedford (with a canoe ferry across Nutting's Lake). A small hiccup was a full-blown SWATT team manhunt in Tewksbury which kept the hikers off Tewksbury wooded trails and increased road walking.

- 6) Henderson gives an update on the ad hoc Friends of Regional Trails and Towpaths (FORTT) which meets with utility reps, MassBike, MassDOT, NMCOG. They specifically eye the so-called Thoreau Path, along the Middlesex Canal between the North Billerica Summit Pond and the Merrimack River (Thoreau documented this 1839 trip on the Middlesex Canal). McLennan Way (formerly known as Canal Road) abuts a parcel that stands to get transferred to the Conservation Commission (BCC). Additionally, Henderson reports that two small undeveloped parcels off Richardson St abutting Town forested land were sold by Cabot Corp to a developer who has since received BCC Order of Conditions. Henderson wonders why Cabot did not consider donating them to the Town. She points out that the risk of losing open space is real. Bowen believes Cabot Corp. may donate one of the parcels to the BCC, and the process is tied up in court.
- 7) Rosa and Malgieri explain an opportunity to employ a team of graduate planning students to assess and inventory town owned lands with GIS tools and to identify all article 97 properties in town. Tufts University seeks Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning (UEP) Field Project Hosts. Henderson moves to allow staff to have a direct line of contact with the UEP project. Bowen seconds. The motion carries: 7-0-0.
- 8) (Old Business)
 - Article 97 properties was discussed as part of item 7.
 - Buckingham canoe access update: Rosa is happy to report that the town removed the National Grid gate, SRWA restored the path on 6/21, and DPW re-installed the kiosk early August. Shawsheen River public access has been restored; usable with parking between the signs.
 - Rosa reports significant headway made on the Depot train station; Clancy and State Rep. Lombardo collaborated on getting exterior and fencing of the Depot addressed Over a 10-week timespan. Rosa reads an email Lombardo wrote to Jennings.
 - Henderson reports that Cider Mill path was mowed. The volunteers await reimbursement.
 - Henderson reports that the private 2-acre parcel at the foot of Gilson Hill is before the Planning Board. Lost open space but gained commercial taxes.
- 9) Next meeting date: 11/5 at 6:30 PM in Collins Room in-person / hybrid.
- 10) Henderson offers a reminder of the RSC community grant opportunity she forwarded to all members. She pursues a spruce-up of Rte. 4, Billerica Great Meadows trailhead parking with USFWS and BCC.
Parker moves to adjourn, motion seconded by Bowen. The meeting was adjourned at 7:00PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Marlies Henderson