

Open Space & Recreation Plan Committee (OSRPC) Meeting Minutes

November 5, 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.

Present (In person): John Bartlett, Jack Bowen, Justin Damon, Marlies Henderson, Mike Parker, Mike Rosa, Darlene Torre (arrived a minute late, left at 8 PM), Grace Torre

Zoom: Consultant Eli Bloch (D&F)

Staff: (In person): Kat Malgieri

Public: Andrew Jennings

RECEIVED
2025 JAN - 8 P 2:08
TOWN CLERK
BILLERICA

- 1) Open mic: Andrew Jennings mentions that the 2025 MassTrails Grant Round is now open. Deadline February 3.
- 2) Rosa asks that the 9/3 minutes be amended to show that the Tufts UEP project includes identifying all article 97 properties. Bartlett moves to accept the 9/3 minutes as amended. Damon seconds. All vote in favor: (8-0-0).
- 3) Malgieri emailed members the State DCS² response to consultant Eli Bloch. Eli shares it on the screen. The new plan has been conditionally approved through October 2031. Conditional approval will allow the town to participate in DCS grant rounds through October 2031, and a grant award may be offered to the town. However, no final grant payments will be made until the plan is completed. Members discussed six points of clarification sought by the State prior to approving the plan. **Malgieri** will send an email seeking a written response from **each OSRPC member**: The deadline for submitting the homework is 11/15.
- 4) Malgieri emailed members the UEP Field Project proposal was accepted on 11/5. The objective is to create an accurate inventory of protected land and update MassGIS. If time allows, add unprotected open space parcels with a list of recommendations to determine which should be protected. The students ask for a title and a video intro of the OSRPC. On the spot, Chair Rosa used the 360° Conference Owl and Zoom meeting recording to introduce the committee, and after discussion, the OSRPC concluded on the following title: *Billerica Field Project Identify Protected Town Properties*.
- 5) **Henderson** advocates for the CPC eligibility request to transfer an amount from CPA funds into the Conservation Commission Trust Fund. This could be a request by BCC through Isabel, or by OSRPC by Henderson. The next CPC meeting is 12/4. The next OSRPC meeting is 12/3. **Henderson** will follow up next month, when the OSRPC can vote on it.
- 6) Henderson follows up on the topic of whether OSRPC should review the Complete Streets (CS) prioritization plan annual (September) update. Particularly the impact to pedestrian, bicycle, transit access to recreation resources. After discussion, Malgieri suggests filling the

¹ In favor – opposed - abstain

² Division of Conservation Services

Open Space & Recreation Plan Committee (OSRPC) Meeting Minutes

open (9th) committee seat with a DPW appointment (Parks-Engineering). **Malgieri** will pursue adding the voting member and follow up.

- 7) Rosa says the Swanson Meadows Golf Course is on Chapter 61B land. He suggests future town-recreation operation of the golf course. Parker says it has only 9 holes, runs with a deficit, and taking over Billerica Country Club makes more sense. **Malgieri** expressed experience in previous municipalities. Running a golf course municipally is associated with a major investment, high cost of maintenance, but it can be a profitable asset - if it is 18 holes. Many of the members expressed interest, especially **Bartlett** who golfs there. He believes **Rocco Scippa** leases the course to the people who run the course; **Scippa** doesn't run it, so he can't claim it runs at a loss. Parker prefers an elderly housing overlay proposal for that area with a deed restricted affordable component. He previously voted in favor of such a (2024 Fall) petitioner warrant article – which was ultimately withdrawn.
- 8) **Henderson** reports having attended the bi-annual MassTrails conference (as encouraged by the OSRPC Policies & Procedures). She submitted a handout of her experiences. **Malgieri** also attended.
- 9) Rosa reports further upgrades in the Billerica MBTA Depot. With restored interior, it is still boarded up. It's planned to be equipped with a satellite police station and cameras. The original 1996 lease has been found. **Kathy Meagher** found the 2015 Station Street parking agreement. **Henderson** will forward it to Rosa and Town Manager's office. Select Board may have to revitalize it. Eventually, the Depot will be open at least for AM commuter service.
- 10) Next meeting date: 12/3 at 6:30 PM in the new upstairs conference room in-person / hybrid.
Bartlett moves to adjourn, motion seconded by **Bowen**. All vote in favor: (7-0-0). The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Marlies Henderson