

Open Space and Recreation Committee Meeting Report for October 21, 2010

Gloucester Open Space and Recreation Committee

Committee Meeting Report for October 21, 2010

Members attending: Daniel Morris, Noel Mann, Susan Hedman, John McElhenny, Patti Amaral

Members absent: Charles Crowley, Dean Murray

Staff: Gregg Cademartori, Steve Winslow, Liam O’Laughlin,
Community Development Staff

1. The meeting began at 5:00 p.m. The OSRC reviewed the minutes from the meetings held on August 12, 2010, and September 23, 2010. To the latter, in the section titled, “Plan Implementation,” two amendments were made. To Ms. Amaral’s priorities for OSRC Plan implementation, “Burnham’s Field” was added. Also, an omitted entry was added, as follows: “John McElhenny – Burnham’s Field. Clear signage at parks and playgrounds.”

Mr. McElhenny moved to accept both sets of minutes, as amended; Ms. Mann seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Ms. Amaral has been approved by the City Council and is now a sworn member of the Committee.

3. Mr. Winslow and Mr. Morris briefed the OSRC on the discussion of the dog park that took place at the last P&D Committee meeting. The OSRC’s recommendations were welcomed by the P&D Committee, who expressed appreciation for the OSRC’s work on the issue. A site visit was hosted the following Saturday by Councilor Ciolino. He and Councilor Curcuru walked around the Stage Fort Park site alternatives #2 & 3 with the project proponents and DPW staff. The site nearest the basketball court seemed to be the most preferred, as it is flatter and would require the least clearing and grading. The next step is for the dog park proponents to find funding for the project and to work with the DPW on an exact location and design.

4. The update on grant applications blended into a discussion of OSRC plan implementation issues.

PARC grant. Not funded. The City’s proposal ranked 27th of 56, and only 22 projects were funded. Mr. Winslow will investigate what were the shortcomings of the City’s proposal. Since the project was not funded, the \$150k of CDBG funds that had been marked as a match for the grant are now unencumbered. Mr. Cademartori asked the OSRC to consider whether & how the funds should be redirected. Should the money be used to start work on some improvements, or should it go towards development of a master plan with phased implementation? Planning is likely to cost about \$50k.

Ms. Mann moved to form a sub-committee, comprising Mr. McElhenny and Ms. Amaral, to develop recommendations and priorities for the full OSRC regarding Burnham’s Field.

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Mr. McElhenny seconded the motion, which was adopted with the OSRC's unanimous consent.

National Park Service – Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Administration. No news.

Community Preservation Funding. The CP Committee recommended providing \$30k to the Community Development Department to improve our knowledge of trails and old roads, property ownership, and rights of way in the North Gloucester woods. This project will certainly inform similar work which is needed in West Gloucester. Ms. Mann offered to initiate a discussion of West Gloucester with the Essex County Green Belt, which has properties and interests in the area. The CP funds and activity may also be used as a match for new recreational trails grant application.

Mr. Winslow reported that DPW's Larry Durkin would like to address the OSRC at its next meeting regarding watershed protection issues. Mr. Durkin is responsible for water supply lands for the City.

Mr. O'Laughlin has been working to identify the study area for the project. Ms. Mann and Mr. Winslow will be refining the picture.

5. Ms. Amaral reported on the poor condition of the lighting at Matos Field. There was some discussion about community initiative and its merits, rather than working through the DPW to effect improvements and repairs.

Mr. Winslow and Mr. Morris visited Emerald Forest with Ms. Amaral. The area is a buffer between the commercial area surrounding the train station and the neighborhood. Much of the area appears to be wetlands and remnants of an foundry foundation is still on the property. Ms. Amaral envisions interpretive signs along trails through the wetland. The OSRC discussed strategies for the area without reaching a conclusion.

6. Mr. Winslow reported that the City received \$500k to extend a harborside walkway from Latitude 43 towards the Gloucester House.

He also reported that the City is sorting out exactly who on staff is responsible for ADA compliance. We need this information to help finish a section of the OSRC Plan. Mr. Winslow is seeking letters of endorsement of the plan from the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and the City Council.

7. The next meeting of the OSRC will be November 18th at City Hall. It will be followed by a hearing on the Essex County Scenic Byway.

8. The meeting adjourned at about 6:30 p.m.