



**CITY OF GLOUCESTER
OPEN SPACE & RECREATION COMMITTEE
2 November 2022
5:30 p.m.
City Hall, Conference Room #1
Heidi Wakeman, Chair**

CITY CLERK
GLOUCESTER, MA
2023 FEB 15 AM 9:00

MINUTES

Present Members: Heidi Wakeman (HW), Daniel Morris (DM), Liam Anastasia-Murphy (LAM), Mark Poulin (MP), Noel Mann (NM), and Richard Quateman (RQ).

Absent Members: Dave Sargent

Staff: Gregg Cademartori (GC), Planning Division

I. ADMINISTRATIVE BRIEFING

OSRC Chair Heidi Wakeman opened the meeting by conducting a roll call and welcoming the public. This is the first OSRC meeting to be held in person in over two and a half years. No minutes from past meetings were available for review and approval.

II. BUSINESS

a. Larry Maver gave a presentation on pickleball and his work towards establishing pickleball (PB) courts in Gloucester. He showed several slides, which are summarized below.

- PB is the fastest growing sport in the USA, 40% growth from 2019-21, about 5 million players. The court is about ½ the size of tennis court. Low impact, easy to learn, positive social setting, low cost.
- Lots of local PB activity and courts in the area. Cape Ann YMCA, Manchester Athletic Club and Manchester-by-the Sea host courts. Organized play is increasing in our area.
- Example: Barnstable, MA. 10 courts. 6 dual tennis/PB courts. Citizen management of town funded courts.
- Locally, some discussion of pairing PB with GHS tennis renovation; however, the private funding for renovation did not support dual use. He plans to contact Community Development to discuss public lands and is interested in siting at Magnolia Woods. The updated Open Space and Recreation Plan (still in draft) cites PB as a priority, among others.
- The process to bring PB courts to Gloucester includes investigating site availability, feasibility, and opportunities for construction and maintenance funding. He noted that membership or user fees may serve the latter. Also, noted, with respect to siting, that noise may be an issue.

There were some remarks from members about potential sites for PB courts. MP noted the availability of Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding. He cited the example of a recent award to Young Legends Street Hockey and conditions placed on the award to require the rink to be available to other uses and user groups. He also noted that CPA funds can be used for feasibility studies. RQ noted public enthusiasm and the popularity of the multi-use indoor courts at Cape Ann YMCA. GC and HW suggested that Mr. Maver contact DPW and Community Development as next steps in his advocacy.

b. MP provided an update on the work of the Community Preservation Committee (CPC). The project proposals recommended for the latest round CPA awards have been forwarded to the City Council's Budget &

Finance Committee (B&F), after which they will be advanced to the full Council for approval. Projects related to the OSRC's interests include:

- GHS baseball field renovation to address drainage issues, \$50,000.
- Stage Fort Park Advisory Committee for ADA compliance and extension of the Lucy Davis Pathway, \$50,000.
- Gloucester Rotary Club for rehab and replacement of Stage Fort Park playground equipment.
- Young Legends to finish up the street hockey facility in Stage Fort Park.

MP also noted that the CPC's plan needs to be updated. There was some discussion of off-cycle funding and the idea of accruing a nest egg of CPA funds for acquisition of open space. MP noted that "outdoor recreation" and "open space acquisition" are categories recognized by the Community Preservation Coalition. The CPC has engaged a new admin support staff member.

c. HW introduced the idea of holding joint meetings with the Dogtown Preservation Commission (DPC) to address our common interests. RQ, who sits on both bodies, endorsed the idea as excellent and noted overlapping interests. The DPC has information that would be useful for the OSRC, just as the DPC should be familiar with priorities expressed in our new OSR plan. RQ noted that last week's DPC meeting was the first since June. Going forward, they intend to meet in person, roughly monthly. DM urged that we invest in collaborative agenda development to ensure meetings are fruitful. RQ noted that a current high priority for the DPC is to move the compost facility out of Dogtown and to restore the lands. NM noted that several years ago there was a study and proposal on that topic. RQ said that there is an investigation into alternative sites for the compost facility, including off island. He noted that Mass Audubon is concerned about runoff and loss of bio-diversity around the compost facility.

d. Next steps for Open Space Recreation Plan (OSRP). After years of work and incorporation of inputs/comments from the public throughout a rigorous process, we are awaiting the Commonwealth's final approval of the revised OSRP. Several members said they had trouble accessing the document due to its size (nearly 200 Mb file). GC will ask staff to clean up the OSRC shared drive and to try to streamline the document for easier access, perhaps separating the appendices and/or property table into separate files. HW expressed appreciation for all of the OSRC members and especially City staff who, with MAPC support, have worked to bring the document to this far amid the special challenges of covid and staffing changes. GC noted that the plan is an expression of priorities and reference document for the Council, the Administration, and the public. He noted that the OSRC is advisory. Execution of the plan is for the Council and administration to do. That said, OSRC members, with their knowledge of the plan and public interests can be effective in prompting the Council and Administration to attend to particular issues.

HW asked the OSRC whether OSRP should be present to the Council and what form such a presentation might take. Several members spoke in favor of such a presentation, noting it would have to be compressed and suggested simple graphics, maps, and excerpts to make highlights accessible to busy Council members.

e. What's next? HW asked members to consider, in light of completing the plan, where and how the members should apply themselves towards the OSRP goals. She urged members to come to the next meeting with ideas on that point. There was some discussion about the need for sustained study and work to operationalize OSRP land acquisition priorities. RQ noted that sea-level rise and coastal inundation may lead to development pressures in Gloucester uplands, and there should be some urgency around protecting open space.

III. PUBLIC (HEARING OR MEETING)

There was no provision in the agenda for public comment. In the course of the meeting, several members of the public in attendance attempted to interject statements, and seemed to be upset when not recognized by the

Chair. HW and GC explained that there was no requirement for the advisory committee to provide opportunity for public comment and that the evening's informational items really didn't call for input.

II. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

III. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the Chair welcomed a motion from RQ to adjourn, which LAM seconded. The motion passed by unanimous show of hands. Meeting closed.

IV. NEXT MEETING

The OSRC set its next meeting for 14 December at 5:30 pm. Subsequent meetings are penciled in for 11 January and 8 February 2023.