

# Town of Harvard Open Space Committee

## April 19, 2022 8:00 am

### Minutes

Members present: Franklyn Carlson, Brian Cook, JoAnne Crystoff, Peter Dorward (Chair), Jim Lee

Non-voting members present: Liz Allard, Chris Ryan

MRPC members present: Karen Chapman

A quorum of OSC was not present but was expected. The meeting was started as an informational meeting.

#### **New Business**

##### **Need for the OSRP Update and Focus**

Liz informed the committee that the 2016 OSRP expires in 2023, and so she initiated the update as it is a fairly lengthy process. She applied for and the Town was granted a DLTA grant from MRPC to help the Town do the update. Karen Chapman's group at MRPC will be assisting the Town, and Jeff Legros is the primary contact.

Peter provided some background on the role the OSC was chartered with by the Select Board in updating the OSRP.

Peter then described the content required for the OSRP, and areas where the 2023 update should focus. The most important was the community survey and community goals and objectives.

- Jim Lee, OSC member joined and a quorum of OSC members were present, and the meeting became a posted and convened OSC meeting.

Other sections such as community setting (demographics) will need to be updated, as well as the various maps. But the historical context has not changed significantly in the 6 years and so should require only minor tweaks.

Chris asked if anything had been changed since 2016 in the requirements for OSRP. Karen indicated that the State is still using the 2008 OSRP handbook, which is what the 2016 OSRP was based on.

##### **OSRP Scope of Work**

Karen walked through the scope of work detailing the roles MRPC and OSC will play in updating the OSRP.

Peter then shared the proposed schedule for the OSRP update. The critical timeline was getting the community survey launched before summer vacations. And the limiting factor was getting the survey questions completed. Peter indicated he hoped to have the survey questions approved at the May OSC meeting.

Jim worried that the compressed schedule would reduce the impact of the survey if the questions are not well founded. Peter observed that the 2016 survey was heavily OS protection weighted, and that more questions focused on active recreation would be appropriate. Peter asked if any of the active recreation OSC members had any inputs, but no representatives were in attendance. Peter then observed that the current survey questions were derived from the 2016 survey questions, and for OS protection they were largely successful except for the funding questions. Jim agreed that the OS protection questions in 2016 were good, but wondered what active recreation questions should be added, and asked Karen if she had examples from other towns. Karen indicated MRPC they had done several surveys for other towns, and could share those with the OSC. Liz pointed out that the OSC committee members would need to be engaged in the process and involved outside of the monthly meetings. Jim agreed and reiterated that the committee members needed to be prepared to approve at the OSC meetings.

Peter then walked through responsibilities for each of the sections of the OSRP.

Chris asked if there was any benefit to conducting a focus group for active recreation input. Jim suggested asking HAA if they were interested in conducting such outreach. Liz suggested the OSC committee members ask their sponsoring committees for input. Brian suggested other recreation groups could be asked for inputs. Peter asked why the outreach to other groups could not be handled through the general survey. And that merged the survey with the focus groups would be problematic. Jo-Anne supported a town wide survey rather than targeted focus groups. Chris suggested that an approach would be to make sure the survey is advertised widely so that all constituencies would participate. Peter pointed out that the 2016 survey exceeded all expectations with over 500 responses. Brian suggested that pointed outreach about the survey would be a way to insure broad based participation. Jo-Anne observed that 500 respondents to a town survey was outstanding, while other towns get much lower responses. Karen confirmed that Harvard's response rate was outstanding. Liz shared the advertising plan for getting survey responses. Karen offered to create a QR code for the code.

Peter raised the question of the process to create the land inventory. IN 2016 Liz did the inventory by manually walking through the assessor's database. Peter indicated that as part of the OSC mapping project, he had attempted to replicate the 2016 OS inventory based on assessor use codes, and have come up with a significantly different number. He asked Karen what process MRPC used. She indicated MRPC has used assessor's codes pulled from MassGIS. Peter suggested MRPC use their normal process, and compare to what Peter numbers show. Karen suggested contacting the MRPC GIS analyst Kayla Kress to discuss processes.

### **OSRP Survey Questions**

Jeff Legros is working on the survey questions, but they were not available for the meeting. Jim asked what the optimal length was for a survey. Karen indicated their experience has been to make as long as necessary to get the information needed. Liz asked, and Karen confirmed, that a length of time to complete the survey would be included.

The committee then reviewed the 2016 OSRP survey questions. Peter stressed the need for more questions focused on active recreation, and the need for determining how to fund OS protection and new playing fields. Brian and Jim observed that a historical reference to how much

money would be needed to create new playing fields would make the survey respondents better informed.

Jim suggested changing the turf field question to eliminate “turf”, as the need for additional athletic fields is an ongoing question.

- Karen indicated that Jeff had texted her that he thought the meeting was an evening meeting, and apologized for not attending.

Karen asked how specific the feedback was desired for individual facilities. Jim responded that usage of individual facilities / trails was not required. Brian suggested adding a question on how willing townspeople are willing to travel to access fields in other towns. Jim added asking whether fields on the outskirts of town would be amenable.

Liz said she would provide ConCom expenditures for acquiring and maintaining OS. The committee discussed how to come up with an equivalent number for recreation. Brian offered to help shepherd that process of getting survey questions for active rec, and to determine the amount of money spent by the Town on field acquisition and maintenance.

Jim made a motion to adjourn. Brian seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 AM by unanimous vote.

Submitted by: Peter Dorward