

**Town of Harvard  
Open Space Committee Meeting Minutes  
January 14, 2021**

Attendees: Paul Cohen, Dan Daly, Peter Dorward, Jim Lee, Gwen Leonard  
Also attending (non-voting): Liz Allard, Chris Ryan

Next Meeting: **Thursday, 2/11/21 8:30 AM.**

Peter called the meeting to order and did a roll call.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Jim Lee nominated Peter Dorward to continue as chair. Unanimously approved. Paul Cohen was nominated to continue as Vice Chair by Dan Daley. Unanimously approved.

**Old Business**

Tax Delinquent Parcels

At the request of the Select Board, the OSC reviewed a list of tax delinquent parcels for use in active recreation or for protection as open space. The review was based on the prioritization models that have been developed, with further insights from those familiar with the parcels.

Peter reported that Rich was still trying to get a firm answer to whether a taking of the land would require a funding source as had previously been indicated. Paul said it typically was not a requirement if used for municipal purposes. It was decided to perform the review assuming that a funding source would NOT be required, and revisit the decisions if that proves to be incorrect.

Peter proposed two changes to the list provided by the Select Board

- Higgins – proposed combining the two lots when reviewing
- 36 Ayer Road – remove from consideration due to the ground water contamination

The remaining parcels were reviewed for OS Protection or suitability for Active Recreation:

- Westchester Co, Old Mill Road
  - Interest for trail connectivity, has snow mobile trail but not open to public; HCT has had discussion in past; recommend for OS protection
  - Not suitable for rec
- Gebo Lane RE Trust, Gebo Lane
  - Parcel is mostly a fire pond, so not appropriate for OS or Active Rec
  - Recommend the Fire Dept be asked if they have use for it
- Franklin, Poor Farm Rd
  - Has residence, and little OS value; not suitable for Active Rec
- Kazogles, Poor Farm Road
  - Adjacent to existing Conservation land, so would extend protected OS; recommend for OS protection
  - No frontage so unusable for Active Rec

- Janus, Littleton Rd
  - Isolated parcel next to Rt 2, sloped ground; not suitable for Active Rec
  - Has vernal pool, but undevelopable and no connectivity, so not recommended for OS protection
- Corbett, Littleton Rd
  - Just were before ZBA trying to get variance to develop; application was withdrawn as unlikely to be approved
  - Has residence, but could be divided and back part potentially part of larger OS parcel
  - Land has value, so expected a tax taking would likely prompt payment of taxes owed
  - Recommend for OS protection, but no suitability for Active Rec
- Minassian, Pinnacle Road
  - Small parcel with potential connectivity next to Fire Tower and Observatory
  - No use as Active Rec, limited value for OS; recommend not to protect
- Hemphill Drilling, Codman Hill Rd
  - Steeply sloped, areas of priority habitat, close to protected OS
  - No use for Active Rec; potential for OS protection, but not recommended at this time
- Higgins, St John Lane
  - Liz reported that the land was taken in 2013 (ATM Article 40), but seems not to have been recorded
  - There is little value for OS protection or Active Rec
- O'Donnell, Woodside Rd
  - Very wet and abuts Conservation land, owner has previously tried to sell to Town
  - Recommend taking for OS; no use for Active Rec
- Pavlin, Bolton Rd
  - Very small sliver on Bolton line
  - No use for Active Rec or OS Protection
- Zink, Wheeler Rd
  - Very small sliver on Bolton line
  - No use for Active Rec or OS Protection
- Erikson, Finn Rd
  - Abuts Delaney, mostly wetland but some high ground along road; good viewpoint
  - Recommend taking for OS; no use for Active Rec

Dan made a motion to recommend the Town acquire the Westchester, Kazogles, Corbett, O'Donnell and Erikson parcels to be protected as OS. Jim Seconded. Unanimously approved. Peter will write a report and give it to Rich for review by the Select Board.

## **New Business**

### Publishing OSC Maps on the Web

Peter reported that he had figured out how to publish the maps for general access (i.e., without an ArcGIS license) on the web with the important ability to turn data layers on/off. But then he discovered the cost to host them would be prohibitive. Instead, we may be able to put the maps on the Assessor's Axis GIS site. The sense of the Committee was that this would be useful, and that all the maps with the exception of the overall OS prioritization and Suitability for Active Rec maps should be uploaded. Liz

volunteered to also put the maps on the OSC web page. These would not allow data layers to be turned on/off.

Peter reported that the UMass CAPS folks had asked if they could use the Harvard OSC maps as an example of how the CAPS data can be used. No one had an objection as long as the overall OS Prioritization map was not included.

#### Chapter 61 Withdrawal

A property recently was sold without notification to the Town and the OSC because there was no change in use. As a result, Peter asked the Assessors to notify OSC of any change in status of Chapter 61 lands moving forward, even if there is no change in use. Mike Saltsman, Head Assessor, indicated he would do so. Liz coined the name for this system – **Chapter Land Early Warning System**.

#### Statement in Support of HCT Fundraising for the CHP APR

Peter reported that HCT had requested a statement of support for their fund raising activities for the CHP APR. Dan made a motion to approve the following statement for use by HCT in fundraising. Paul seconded. Unanimously approved.

“The Town of Harvard Open Space Committee has identified the Community Harvest Project orchard on Prospect Hill as one of the highest priority parcels to protect based on its agricultural use, areas of ecological significance, proximity to protected open space corridors, and wetlands and streams.”

#### OSC Annual Report

Peter shared a draft of the OSC annual report for review by the committee. Due to file compatibility issues, not all members were able to review the document. Because of a looming submission deadline it was suggested that those who had not been able to review the draft would do so shortly after the meeting and supply any edits to Peter for inclusion. Dan offered to rewrite the opening Active Recreation paragraph that was outdated. Peter committed to immediately providing the document in a readable form to those who could not open it. It was agreed that two maps – Protected/Unprotected OS and Proximity to protected OS – be included if technically possible as examples of our work.

Dan moved that Peter be authorized to add any inputs from OSC members to the draft annual report, and to submit it by the deadline. Seconded by Jim. Unanimously approved.

#### OSC 2021 Goals

Due to the aforementioned file compatibility issues and the lack of remaining time, a discussion of the OSC goals for 2021 was tabled until the next meeting.

A motion was made by Jim and seconded by Dan to adjourn at approximately 9:30 AM.

Minutes by: Peter Dorward