Open Space and Recreation Committee

Meeting Minutes for 11/15/2024

In attendance: OSRC Committee Members: Justine Krumm, Amy Trevvitt, Alex Reismann, Aaron Poulin, and Laurie Pike. Audience of Citizens: none

Call the meeting to order at 5:31PM

First order of business was to nominate a Chair for the next phase of the committee’s work as we begin the process of working towards accomplishing the goals and actions listed in the Open Space and Recreation Plan. Justine Krumm was nominated and accepted role of the Chair of the OSRC. The vote was unanimous by all five members.

Laurie Pike shared a summary of the Chapter 61 program and the town’s right of refusal for any property coming out of Chapter 61 before it has completed the contractual agreement and is being sold for development (to someone outside of the owner’s family) then the town has the right of first refusal. The owner must notify the town of their intension to sell the property for development. The town would then have 90 days to respond and purchase the property at fair market value or could give it’s right of first refusal to a nonprofit agency for purchase. Lands that would be of value to the town would include watershed properties, wildlife habitat, wildlife corridors, important natural resources etc. Things to explore further would include where would the money come from for such a purchase and reaching out to Franklin Land Trust and other nonprofits to see if they would be interested if the situation arises.

There are five hard copies of the OSRC Plan to be distributed to certain committees and departments with responsibility for some of the goals. It was suggested that we meet with those committees and discuss our top 10 goals and actions for this year and discuss plans for how we will accomplish them and solicit help from the committees that are listed as also responsible for certain goals. We discussed possibly writing a letter to each committee and attaching it to a hard copy with pages highlighting those goals that are under each committee’s purview.

No digital copies of the Capital Stabilization Plan for the Town of Rowe have been found. The Finance Committee did agree to take over this responsibility several years ago. Laurie will reach out to a former member of the finance committee who was working on this before leaving to take another job.

Indoor spaces for recreational programming for town residents would be currently limited to the library and the school. It is suggested that we reach out to the school committee to get their approval to use the school for after school activities and functions for the community. Also, how they would like interested parties to contact the school about using their spaces.

Trout Unlimited and Massachusetts Environmental Waterways is looking for support from the Town of Rowe for a research project that they have proposed to stop stocking certain sections of the Deerfield River up to the Vermont border in an effort to bring back native cold water fisheries. We agreed that we would like to support the effort in any way that we can. There will be a river clean up in the spring that we may be able to get volunteers for. "Trout Unlimited, Eric Holloran, has grant funded research projects that they would like to exercise in Rowe that would monitor water quality and PH acidity, wildlife usage, in some of our brooks and streams. There may be opportunities for volunteers for this project, as well.

Massachusetts Audubon, represented by Dave Rothstein, wants to open collaboration with the OSRC, based on recent funding opportunities with Mass Audubon's Canopy 30x30, and other qualifying grants. Justine will coordinate future engagements with Dave for the committee.

It was suggested that a survey to the community regarding the top 10 goals of the OSRP as identified by the OSRC would give the community input as to what goals should be prioritized. Alex volunteered to put together a survey monkey that could be accessed by residents on their computers and paper copies could be available at the town hall and library. Notice would have to be given through a town-wide call that the survey can be accessed through the town’s webpage or picked up at the town hall or library. Residents could request a copy be mailed to them by contacting the Town Hall staff. The purpose of the survey would be to know what are the priorities of the town’s people based on the list of goals presented. This will help with determining which grants to pursue to achieve the goals. The support that a specific goal has from the community to insure that it will be used and valued.

Amy will submit an OSRC article to the Goal Post for the December issue.

The next meeting will be held on January 17, 2025 at 5:30 PM. This will be both an in -person and zoom meeting.

Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by, Laurie Pike OSRC member