

Swanzy Open Space Committee
3/20/07 meeting minutes

*Minutes are not final until reviewed and approved by the Open Space Committee.
Review and approval of minutes generally takes place at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Committee.*

Attendance: Victoria Barlow, Nancy Carlson, Deb Crowder, Katherine Feist, Jeanne Thieme, Bud Winsor. Town Planner Carbonneau. Also present: Theresa Diluzio and Ruth Snyder
The meeting convened at 5:00 p.m.

Guests/members of the public Theresa Diluzio has volunteered to fill the vacancy created by Suzanne Whittemore's resignation. The Selectmen will consider her appointment. Gerry Bussiere also has expressed interest in helping the Committee in any way he can.

Special guest: Tax Collector Ruth Snyder answered Committee members' questions regarding the effect of conservation easements and current use on tax rates.

Status of current land protection projects

Lily Pendleton

The Monadnock Conservancy Board reviewed and enthusiastically approved Lily's project. Lily has engaged attorney Mary Lou Caffrey to review her documents.

Martin Brook watershed

Thieme accompanied the MC Lands Committee when they walked the Johnson land on 2/27. The Conservancy is moving forward with an easement. Suzie and Mike Johnson are working with their attorney, Bill Priggee, on paperwork.

Rather than trying to estimate a generic value for conservation easements in the Martin Brook watershed area, appraiser John Newcombe (Monadnock Appraisal Company) will instead prepare values using the Johnson land as his basis.

Jean Blood- Crowder will collect the invoice for legal costs, for reimbursement.

Liaison reports, if warranted by recent activity

The Conservation Commission has reserved time at the beginning of their April agenda for OS to appear, to discuss our committees' roles and responsibilities in open space protection.

Status of assignments + projects

Web page - We lack technical expertise. Can Sara help with this? Bruce Barlow?

Project management worksheet, communications log - Feist has completed the worksheet and log, and will bring it to the next meeting.

Protection of 3 town-owned lands - Carlson and Winsor continue to work from tax parcel maps to determine which town-owned lands have highest priority. Some town-owned parcels are back lots, or in the floodway. Carpenter Home is still at the top of the list, as well as the 37-acre Tracey property off Causeway Road. The Sawmill property is owned by the Conservation Commission, but has no restrictions. The ConCom also owns the picnic area land near the Cresson covered bridge.

The 10 acre Pinney property at Route 10 and Sawyers Crossing also is a priority. Some properties we had represented in the original matrix as being in town ownership are no longer.

Town land purchase/easement management - Barlow and Crowder have compiled applicable portions of the *Master Plan* and *Open Space Plan*, and Zoning Ordinance. The Open Space Committee is the first item on the Conservation Commission's April agenda. At this meeting we hope to begin clarifying our committees' roles and responsibilities in open space protection, as a first step in exploring what will be necessary for town ownership and/or management of additional conservation lands.

March postcard - Barlow finalized text and submitted the design to the postcard production company. The card will not be produced and mailed until we resolve complications with the Pendleton easement and Lily's reverse mortgage.

Oxen initiative - Barlow & Thieme met with Old Homestead Association on Tuesday, 2/13, to request their participation in the joint initiative. OHA is enthusiastic, and will handle the role of not-for-profit to receive donations. On 2/28, V. Barlow and B. Barlow met with Selectmen to inform them of the initiative. In April, Barlow & Thieme will present the initiative to the Planning Board.

Bruce Barlow's web site is fully functional, with links to YouTube videos. To date, PayPal donations total \$85. V. Barlow finalized the brochure, with Thieme gaining approval from Suzie Johnson for references to her interest in a conservation easement. Thieme, B. Barlow, V. Barlow, and Feist handed out 365 copies of the brochure during voting on March 13.

B. Barlow and V. Barlow, supervised by Carbonneau, submitted two applications for \$5,500 in grant funds from Entergy.

On March 12, V. Barlow met with Keene *Sentinel* editor James Roumaniere, Jr. to outline the Buck and Ike story, emphasizing its basis in open space protection and in celebrating Swanzey's rural character. Roumaniere would like the *Sentinel* to cover our work in a series of stories.

Town Administrator Beth Fox has approved installation of a locked collection box at Town Hall.

Motion by Carlson to approve expenditure of \$500 budgeted by the Open Space Committee for an educational event. The funds will be used to cover reproduction of materials related to promoting open space protection through the oxen initiative. Second by Feist. All in favor.

Wildlife Action Plan maps - The Town's tax map provider has been unresponsive to repeated requests for tax parcel data in GIS format. Carbonneau perseveres.

New business (10 minutes)

1. To clarify a question left over from our January meeting, OS Committee members have signed up for one, two, and three-year terms.
2. The Committee reviewed and approved a draft letter supporting James Toye's Eagle Scout project to repair Honey Hill trails. The text is as follows:

The Swanzey Open Space Committee enthusiastically supports James Toye's Eagle Scout proposal to make improvements to the trails on Honey Hill.

The Open Space Committee protects Swanzey's rural character by permanently preserving important open space. We do this by promoting land conservation, educating landowners, and bringing together landowners and land trusts.

Protected through the State's Land Conservation Investment Program, Honey Hill has been perpetually preserved with a conservation easement. The public is invited to walk the marked trails on this property, leading to the summit of the Hill.

As we work with landowners, we point to this conservation easement as an example, to encourage others to protect their land. Our argument is strengthened when visitors have a safe and positive experience.

James's work will enhance open space preservation in our town. We are grateful to him for proposing this project, and hope you will approve it.

3. Barlow reported a call from Keene residents Kathryn and Rob Koning expressing their interest in protection of Hewes Hill (off Rabbit Hollow Road). Diluzio also has identified this location as a priority area.

New assignments (5 minutes)

Minutes of 1/13 "retreat," minutes of 2/13 meeting

Vote by Crowder to approve the both sets of minutes. Second by Feist. All in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Barlow