

OPEN SPACE SPECIAL MEETING

JANUARY 20 2006

PRESENT: Victoria Barlow, Sara Carbonneau, Nancy Carlson, Deb Crowder, Katherine Feist, Jeanne Thieme, Suzanne Whittemore, Bud Winsor

Vision 2007 Plan - Discussed vision/goals for 2007 re: missions statement.

Current mission statement: ***The committee's charge is to promote land conservation and to be vigilant for opportunities for land conservation; to educate landowners about the topic, to network among landowners and land trusts, and to acquire land or conservation easements.***

Decision: *Edit mission statement last sentence to read: **and to promote the acquisition of land or conservation easements.***

Motion to change, seconded, passed

Decision: *Goals 2007:*

- Permanent protection of one of the last working farms in Swanzey
- Promote and assist with 3 additional land parcels in priority area of Martin Brook and South Branch watersheds
- Work with town officials to develop draft proposal to revise Swanzey subdivision regulations to protect open space in cluster subdivisions
- Complete the process of protection on 3 most important town-owned parcels not currently protected, either through deed restrictions or conservation easements
- Create and present an Open Space educational and/or fun event (e.g. the oxen initiative)

Motion to accept goals as described above, seconded, passed

Questions for discussion:

1. Shall we pursue a recommendation to the town to consider future fee ownership of lands and management of conservation easements?
2. Shall we commit to practice of outright purchase of conservation easements?

Decision: *create subcommittee to research above issues with Swanzey town groups and area groups involved with similar work, and to determine the potential need for and to complete the draft of a recommendation to present to town officials (no time limit to project)*

Motion, seconded, passed

Decision: *The Swanzey Open Space Committee will, for the year 2007, commit to practice of outright purchase of conservation easement on a specified per acre cost of lands in the designated priority area of Martin Brook and South Branch Ashuelot watersheds.*

Motion as stated above, seconded, passed

(Clarification: Open Space will also continue its commitment to offer payment for fees and survey costs on all projects if needed for completion of project)

Note: The decision on which area to base our focus is in line with Open Space Plan specified priority areas, Swanzey Master Plan and New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan.

Communications – Discussed internal and external communications (best practices, issues of confidentiality; communication guidelines, tracking communications (documentation of sent items, to whom, when, etc); regular communications with specific bodies: SB, PB, CC, OS Advisory-when, what is needed, how often)

Clarifications:

- Members attending a “kitchen table” gathering cannot make representation of what the committee will do; informational only (mission, vision etc)
- Email can be used for distribution of information only – cannot be used for dialogue

Decisions:

- *Minutes will be as brief and to the point as possible and projects in the “pipeline” will be generically named and tracked via a project worksheet*
- *Committee will maintain a log of written materials provided to landowners indicating date, recipient, materials sent*
- *Committee will track projects for inception to completion, no matter the conclusion (worksheet draft: member assignment)*
- *Both the logs and the tracking sheets will be housed in Sara’s office for ease of access and referral*
- *Sara Carbonneau should be the person for landowners to contact with questions of town requirements rather than “front office” personnel as she is most in tune with Open Space mission and focus.*
- *Regular communications with specific groups will occur via liaisons (see committee structure)*

Motion to accept decisions regarding committee communications, seconded, passed

Committee Structure – discussion on committee roles and responsibilities, official and non-official meetings, term and first official day of term, monthly meeting structure, decision on 2007 officers and subcommittee members.

Clarification on meetings:

- All committee meetings are open to the public
- Since this is not a hearing the public may attend, but not necessarily be part of meeting dialogue
- Any “kitchen table” gatherings should be less than a quorum (3 or less members – preference to be 2 members)
- Open Space may schedule an emergency meeting at any time with 24 hour notification to town office (Sara)
- Site visits are considered a meeting and must be more than 2 members and must be officially posted
- Official meetings may discuss sensitive issues in a non-public session (per RSA____, in particular section pertaining to purchase and acquisition of real estate)
- Sara provided each member with a copy of booklet, *Ethics for Land Use Board Members* for future reference

Decisions:

- *Meeting agendas will begin with item: **New Business***
- *Any Public attendees will be handled within the New Business agenda item, guideline 15 minute*
- *“Kitchen table” events will be attended by 2 Open Space members maximum*
- *Second agenda item - Minutes of previous meeting reviewed and approved*
- *Committee Roles with responsibilities defined*
- *New slate of offices for 2007*
- *Each member agrees to serve for a 3 year term, new term to begin the day following town voting day in March*

****Notetaker note: we did not specifically state that officers will serve for 1 year term with new assignments to occur each year post March voting day – do we so intend?**

Committee Offices 2007:

- Chair (main contact with town and other entities, develop agenda, meeting facilitator, task management) – Victoria Barlow
- Secretary (minutes) – **to be determined**
- Liaisons (two-way communications, ongoing basis)
 - Selectmen (regular meeting schedule) – Nancy Carlson
 - Planning Board (regular meeting schedule) – Victoria Barlow
 - Conservation Commission (regular meeting schedule) – Deb Crowder
 - Capital Improvements (regular meeting schedule) – Victoria Barlow
 - Open Space Advisory (provide information quarterly basis) – Jeanne Thieme

Subcommittees 2007:

- Town-owned lands protection – Nancy Carlson, Bud Winsor
- Town land purchase and management of conservation easement – Victoria Barlow, Deb Crowder
- Open Space Event planning – Victoria Barlow
- Log and worksheet – Suzanne Whittemore, Katherine Feist
- Web pages – **to be determined**

Motion to accept meeting structure decisions, new roles and subcommittees as defined, accept member assignments, seconded and passed

2007 Planning and wrap-up

Town deliberative session is 2/6/2007 – all members should attend. OS Advisory liaison will contact members and ask them to attend

Town voting day is 3/13/2007

Next Open Space meeting 2/13/2007 – discussed need for update re: Lily Pendleton (new postcard?)

Meeting adjourned; minutes respectfully submitted Suzanne Whittemore 1/21/2007