

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire  
**Open Space Committee (OSC)**  
Meeting Minutes – May 13, 2015

**Present at Meeting:** Chair Ames called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Present were Bob McElvey, Beverly Bernard, Karen Sielke, Sharon Greatbatch, Jeanne Thieme, Alternate Theresa DiLuzio and Selectmen’s Representative Ken Colby. Mary Farnsworth joined the meeting at 5:14 p.m.

**Absent:** Alternate Deb Crowder

**Minutes:**

Sielke **moved** to accept the minutes from April 8, 2015 and Ames seconded the motion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

**AGENDA ITEMS**

**EVENTS AND EVENT PUBLICITY**

Discussion was held regarding preparations for the June event.

- June event: Walk for Animals
  - Purpose: Build awareness of OSC goals and activities
  - Date, time, location: Saturday, June 20, 2015 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Dillant-Hopkins Airport
  - Parking: Dillant-Hopkins airport – terminal building parking lot
  - Suitable for ages: all
  - Exertion level: low
  - Special equipment: table, chairs, tent, trucking for oxen
  - Publicized (name, date)

- |                         |                              |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| _____ Keene Sentinel    | _____ Monadnock Shopper News |
| _____ OSC website       | _____ OSC Facebook           |
| _____ Town website news | _____ Town movable type sign |
| _____ Posters           | _____ Other                  |

There was a brief discussion about publicity for the event and it was agreed that the OSC not need to provide publicity since the Humane Society does a good job of promoting the event. Ames showed a brochure for the event with photos of the oxen and mentioned that they are an integral part of this annual event. Sielke and Thieme said they are planning to be at the Walk for Animals. DiLuzio also offered to be present at the event. Lineup for the Walk is 9:45 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and the Walk begins at 10:00 a.m. It was agreed to have at the event a table, tablecloth, flowers, buttons and postcards to give out to participants. There was also discussion about having a tent at the event.

**REPORTS**

**Yale Forest Hike and OSC Business Cards**

Mary Farnsworth provided a report on the hike, which was well attended with 23 people and 4 dogs. Farnsworth spoke about having a sign-in sheet to record names of hikers and their interest level. Bernard and McElvey both mentioned having sign-in sheets in the past for hikes. Farnsworth suggested having business size cards to pass out to hikers. DiLuzio mentioned passing out brochures since we have

them. Some brochures were passed out and reviewed as a possible handout but they were determined to be a bit large for hikers to store easily when given out at the beginning of a hike. Farnsworth said she would provide a design for a business-size card and Bernard will create something in Publisher that could be printed up by Gem-Graphics. Bernard will provide a couple of designs to the committee members for review.

Bernard mentioned there is no view at Mt. Cresson, and DiLuzio mentioned that Mt. Caesar is becoming overgrown as well. There was some discussion about removing small bushes from Mt. Caesar to enhance the view. Discussion included a work party and whether or not it would be officially sponsored by the OSC; members concluded that the work would not be an official OSC activity. Colby said the Selectmen could grant permission to cut shrubs at Mt. Caesar and will do so and let the members know when that happens.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Ashuelot River project, scheduling site visit**

Ames said that Stacy Gambrel from the Monadnock Conservancy reported that the owners of the smaller property have decided not to proceed with an easement at this time. The owner of the second parcel in the same general location will go forward with an easement. There was a discussion regarding the costs associated with the conservation easement. Discussion also included a checklist for evaluating property for proposed easements. Ames will propose a date of May 27, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. on Mathews Road for a site visit and confirm with the committee.

### **West Hill Conservation Area funding**

A discussion was held about the Board of Selectmen's response to Monadnock Conservancy offer to meet with Selectmen & members of Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Open Space Committee to detail easement changes that result from acceptance of ARM funding. The Selectmen decided not to have such a meeting and confirmed that hunting should be allowed based on the New Hampshire Fish and Game regulations. Colby spoke about the non-restrictive nature of hunting that the Town of Swanzey, including the Conservation Commission, required as part of providing funds. Bernard noted that Anne McBride from the Monadnock Conservancy will be meeting with the Board of Selectmen for clarification. Ames said the owners of the property want to reserve the right to post against hunting of bear and certain predatory animals. Colby left the meeting at 5:51 p.m.

### **Nature play space**

Ames spoke about a possible collaboration with Antioch's Conservation Psychology Institute (June 2015) and the Open Space Committee using Belding pasture as an Institute case study. On April 16 Ames e-mailed event organizer Ruth Kermish-Allen with OSC members' questions and learned that there has not been a project of this kind sponsored by the group, so there is no history to serve as a guide.

Ames spoke about an informal public walk at the pasture, which was attended by a number of the committee members, around the perimeter of the land at the river boundary. Members observed how the river and fields were delightfully explored by the two grandchildren of Thieme. She suggested that an event could be planned to invite children accompanied by a responsible adult to explore the fields and river. Discussion was held about having guides, timing, dates, field trip, and the idea that 13 Waldorf 2<sup>nd</sup> grade children may be involved. The members agreed to table this topic for now.

### **Bonfire and Star-gazing in Belding Field**

Ames suggested that a bonfire, star-gazing and observing the Perseid meteor shower in August could be an event planned by the OSC for this summer that might attract families. Ames will check on when the meteor shower peaks and the phase of the moon for the best time to plan such an event.

### **Safford Drive celebration**

Ames spoke about the upcoming opening of Safford Drive and the ribbon-cutting ceremony that will be held by the Town. She noted that participation by the OSC members encourages business planning and economic development, which is in line with the goals of OSC as well.

### **FOR INFORMATION**

#### **Limited Access to Honey Hill Trails**

Bernard spoke about access to Honey Hill hiking trails being limited by the LaBarre family who owns land near to Town-owned land on the west side of NH Route 32. The Town owns a 100 foot parcel of land which provides access to a trail to Honey Hill. The LaBarres have erected a gate and other physical barriers to the entrance at the highway and have erected electronic fence posts on the land. They also contend that the trail map box erected by the OSC is on their land. Bernard reported that the Swanzey Conservation Commission is monitoring the situation and is possibly hiring a survey of the rear of the property to determine the position of the trail map box. She also reported that they are considering working with the State Department of Transportation to obtain a driveway permit off NH Route 32 which would provide access to the Town-owned land.

#### **KSC recognizes one of Swanzey's own**

Ames spoke briefly about Keene State College honoring Swanzey resident Barbara Skuly at the College's 2015 commencement. Skuly received this year's Granite State Award for the tremendous impact she makes through volunteer service especially as Chair of the Ashuelot River Local Advisory Committee.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **Treasured Places Art Exhibit**

Thieme informed the committee that the Monadnock Conservancy is partnering with the Historical Society of Cheshire County to sponsor an Art Exhibit beginning May 29, 2015 which will run through September 5, 2015. Executive Director for the Monadnock Conservancy Ryan Owens will be speaking about Conservation Movement Today on July 22, 2015. The Art Exhibit is celebrating conservation lands of the Monadnock Region as seen through the eyes of 50 artists.

#### **Wessels Talk/Walk**

Farnsworth spoke about the Tom Wessels event which the OSC is sponsoring later in the year and said that there is going to be a lot of folks interested in attending the event given the comments she heard at the Yale Forest Hike. A discussion was held regarding the size of the room/chairs needed and whether or not Town Hall would be adequate for the turn-out. Greatbatch offered to explore the possibility of obtaining the pavilion at Richardson Park for this talk. There is adequate parking at the site. She will investigate the interior as to whether it would suit the needs for the presentation and report back to the committee.

**NEXT MEETING:** June 10, 2015

**ADJOURNMENT**

Thieme **moved** to adjourn; Sielke seconded the motion and all were in favor. ***Motion passed.***  
Adjournment occurred at 6:27 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Beverly Bernard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary