

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Open Space Committee (OSC)
Workshop Meeting Minutes – January 18, 2014
Bridges Inn, 27 Main St. West Swanzey, NH

Note: Minutes are not final until reviewed and approved by the Committee. Review and approval of minutes generally takes place on the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Committee.

Present at Meeting: Chair Jeanne Thieme called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m. Present were Chairman Jeanne M. Thieme, Beverly Bernard, Theresa DiLuzio, Sharon Greatbatch, Karen Sielke and Mary Farnsworth.

Absent: Deb Crowder, Bob McElvey, Judith Hildebrandt

Others Present: Director of Planning and Community Development Sara Carbonneau

Minutes:

The minutes from December 11, 2013 were considered. DiLuzio **moved** to approve the minutes, and Farnsworth seconded the motion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

Swanzey Open Space Committee Mission Statement:

Your Swanzey Open Space Committee facilitates in the protection of Swanzey's rural character by permanently preserving important open space. We do this by promoting land conservation, bringing together landowners with land trusts and by providing the tools to assist in the acquisition of land or conservation easements.

AGENDA ITEMS

Goal for workshop

Plan and discuss implementation of OSC events/projects for 2014 as they align with our Mission Statement.

First item of business was the Chair asking the committee to finish the sentence: "In 2 years I would like to see the OSC....." Members of the committee offered the following long range ideas.

Long Range Goals:

- A CSA, Co-op farm in Swanzey – Farm stand, veggies & meat
- Acquire more land
- More trails on town and easement properties
- More exposure of OSC
- More involvement with children
- Have Facebook page
- Be about people/landowners
- Establish more of an ongoing relationship with the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) – TIF District – like creating a walking trail around the TIF district
- Take advantage of the availability of oxen
- Use Public Relations to promote positive image of OSC

- Build relationships with individual and groups to promote collaboration
- Research ideas from out of the area

A. **Annual Events** – the committee discussed annual events that the committee is committed to initiating. These are Projects that have become “Annual” events over time and that the committee wishes to continue. Greatbatch made a **motion** to adopt the Walk for Animals, Old Home Day, and Rail Trail Awareness Day as annual events for 2014; there was a second to the motion by DiLuzio, and all were in favor. **Motion passed.**

- May-Walk for Animals – Thieme will Captain
- July -Old Home Day – All
- June - Rail Trail Awareness Day – perhaps with a scavenger hunt – Greatbatch will Captain

B. **Priority List** – the committee then considered other ideas for projects that had been proposed by members of the committee and prioritized in a spreadsheet encompassing all members and the Board of Selectmen’s priority lists. The following were determined to be of the highest priority and therefore to be initiated during 2014 in addition to the already established annual events above.

- Research, inventory & promote all hiking trails open to public – create brochure – Farnsworth will be the Captain, and DiLuzio and Sielke will assist.
 - Possible Intern help from Antioch – this was tabled for now
 - Possible wildlife grant – this was tabled for now
- Outdoor winter educational walk/talk at Dickinson Park – ask Bob McElvey to Captain – Suggested that February 2014 for this project.
- Indoor educational projects/talks including the history of the area – DiLuzio to Captain – targeting the end of October for the first project/talk.
- Hiking project in summer or fall – August – Sielke will Captain

C. **Other items**

- Deliberative Session – A discussion was held regarding a reference at the Town Budget Hearing to using some of the \$50,000 that goes into the land acquisition capital reserve account for reclamation of roads. Chair Thieme asked the members to be cognizant of the benefits for reserving money for land acquisition so they can defend the funding in the account.
 - Ideas for Defending land acquisition:
 - Quality of life benefits
 - Attracting business generates economic growth
 - This is the only recourse that the town has to preserve open space.
 - Funds enabled purchase of property which was a hazard (WSAA building), removing it, and creating a park which has more than 175 feet of river frontage.
- Funds - that have been carried over (\$895.82) from the Swanzey Rural Character Project and Welcome to Swanzey sign (\$481.00). Carbonneau mentioned that if the OSC had a project to present to the Board of Selectmen to recommend use of that money, they might assign the money to that project. Thieme asked the committee to think about and discuss at next meeting.
 - Discussion on the possibility of using the money for street banners
 - Suggestion also for signage for West Swanzey at Whitcomb Hall site
 - Suggestion also for signage at the West Swanzey Park project
- Ongoing OSC jobs

- a. Facebook page – it was agreed to ask the Board of Selectmen for their approval for a Facebook page for the OSC – Bernard will follow up.
- b. Updating town website - connecting with Coleen Birmingham and Sara Carbonneau – Bernard will manage this activity
- c. Updating Master Calendar for Website – Bernard will manage this activity
- d. Writing Thank You's, sending cards when appropriate – Thieme will continue to do.

D. Miscellaneous

1. Jean Blood's donation fund – Thieme reported that there has been another \$100 donation to the OSC in memory of Jean Blood. A brief discussion was held about how to utilize the funds in Jean's name. It was noted that Jean loved her farm and that should be included in any memorial to her.
 - a. Suggestion for a bench in stone with etching of her farm on it. Greatbatch volunteered to research pricing for a stone bench. Will discuss further at February meeting.
2. OSC terms for members – Thieme passed out the scheduled terms for members of the committee.
3. Cresson Bridge – Reinforcement of abutments on the covered bridge is planned by the State of New Hampshire. The current parking lot will become the staging area for this work and Carbonneau noted there is already erosion at the site which will need to be addressed. Feedback to go to Carbonneau.
4. Christian Hill/updates - DiLuzio discussed the possibility of a new trail on the site.

ADJOURNMENT

Greatbatch **moved** to adjourn, and seconded by Sielke, all were in favor. **Motion passed.** Adjournment at 12:03 p.m.

Next meeting is February 5, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. at Town Hall.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary