

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Open Space Committee (OSC)
Meeting Minutes – November 13, 2013

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 5:00 p.m. Present were Chairman Jeanne M. Thieme, Bob McElvey, Beverly Bernard, Theresa DiLuzio, Sharon Greatbatch, Mary Farnsworth, Selectman's Representative Kenneth P. Colby, Jr., Alternate Karen Sielke. Sielke was seated for Crowder.

Absent: Deb Crowder, Judith Hildebrandt

Minutes:

The minutes from October 9, 2013 were considered. Greatbatch **moved** to approve the minutes, and McElvey seconded the motion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

AGENDA ITEMS

Proposed 2014 Budget

The OSC budget would include \$5,000 in operating expenses and \$50,000 in the Land Acquisition Account. Thieme noted the information provided by Treasurer Hildebrandt showed that the committee has spent \$444.46 during the 2013 year. She also noted that this year the committee did not have a conservation easement to fund and celebrate. The committee cannot predict whether there will be a conservation easement planned, so the same amount will be requested for 2014. Thieme suggested that the OSC donate some funds to the Rail Trail. DiLuzio, Bernard, and McElvey said they thought it was a good idea.

There was a brief discussion regarding the awareness of the Board of Selectmen to the variability of the funding need of the committee, and Colby assured the committee that the Selectmen were aware of that variability.

Motion by Greatbatch to donate \$3,500 to the rail trail, second by DiLuzio and all were in favor, except Colby, who abstained. ***Motion passed.***

The Committee agreed to ask the Board of Selectmen for \$5,000 for operating expenses and \$50,000 in the Land Acquisition for fiscal year 2014.

Walk/Talk Event for Mt. Caesar Timber Harvest

A discussion was held regarding the Walk/Talk – Sielke said it went well, McElvey said he thought it went well also. Greatbatch said it is discouraging that more citizens didn't show up.

- Update on the trail box at Mt. Caesar – Greatbatch said the box isn't up yet, but she will get to it. There are brochures available to reproduce about early-succession forest. There was a discussion regarding four-wheeler/ATVs getting access to the trail which causes erosion. Initially there will be four-color brochures in the box, which were provided by Forester Steve Roberge

dfrom the UNH Extension Service. Bernard and Farnsworth offered to check the box periodically and refill with reprints as needed.

- Further thoughts on info for residents re: timber harvesting – Farnsworth said she visited the site recently with friends and they were satisfied with the work being done. Thieme suggested that the OSC work to promote the trail at Mt. Caesar.

Master Plan Update

No news – after discussion on the status of the Master Plan it was agreed by the committee to ask Director of Planning and Community Development Sara Carbonneau to come to the next meeting in December at 4:30 p.m. to find out the status of the Master Plan and to ask her for her vision for Swanzey and how the OSC might be involved.

Update on Carter property (price has been lowered to \$450,000)

There is an estimated 24 acres at the site. No other news at this point.

Update on any other properties

DiLuzio is working on a potential easement commitment in West Swanzey. Visibility for OSC helps create attention to conservation easements.

W.Swanzey Park update

The committee discussed the possibility of making a donation for the park next year. Bernard filled in the committee on canoe access at the park site and stated that the plan for the dry hydrant has been modified so as to allow better canoe access.

Bob's Stewardship Idea (Theresa was going to get a list of other less known areas that could use stewards)

The idea is to encourage other folks to join us in being land stewards. Adopt a trail. Sielke showed a stewardship check list from another Town that can be used after visiting a property. DiLuzio pointed out the Monadnock Conservancy has a form that can be used as well. Thieme suggested that this is a good way to interact more frequently with land owners.

Wish List Review

Thieme asked about planning for next year. She asked about whether a retreat is helpful. Farnsworth noted that the committee did create a new mission statement, and events were planned based on the wish list. Thieme mentioned that the retreat worked well for creating a schedule of events. Farnsworth and Greatbatch suggested we re-visit the wish list from last year. The committee agreed to have a retreat in 2014 for planning purposes and to prepare for the retreat by reviewing the wish list and to come to the OSC December meeting with suggestions/ideas for planning purposes.

Thieme will ask The Bridges Inn about dates that might be available for the committee to have a Saturday retreat morning in either January or February of 2014.

Properties for Hiking Possibilities

- **Dickinson Forest**

DiLuzio reported on the forest as a place for hikes down by the river. She mentioned a land steward who knows the property and is willing to conduct a walk on the property. DiLuzio said it

would be good to be familiar with the property which has access to the Fire Department muster field.

- **Page Meadow**

DiLuzio reported on Page Meadow off Route 12 and Marlborough. Sielke said that access to Page Meadow is at a field next to the Nissan Dealership on Route 12. DiLuzio said the property is beautiful and is owned by the Monadnock Conservancy. DiLuzio suggested that we can promote properties that are under easements and should be open to people to hike on.

DiLuzio suggested that the committee obtain a file cabinet for consolidating information about properties under easement. Bernard pointed out that there is very little storage space at Town Hall. Farnsworth said that the committee should focus on two or three properties to promote with brochures. McElvey asked whether permission is needed to visit the properties, but DiLuzio said no permission required for Dickinson Forest and Page Meadow.

Brochures or Postcards to promote hikes on public access properties

There was a discussion regarding the creation of town-wide mailings to residents publicizing lands that are protected and open to public access and have hiking possibilities. Thieme pointed out that the OSC doesn't have the manpower to groom trails and information should be included in the promotional material that trails are not groomed. Bernard mentioned that there are residents of town who like to hike and are unaware of the more prominent properties with conservation easements on them. Because members of the committee are interested in visiting some of the properties, DiLuzio volunteered to email committee members when she is free to plan for a hike. The idea is to be familiar with the trails available for hiking to promote in a brochure.

Thoughts on Jean Blood's donations? (The Blood Farm is on the market) – this item was tabled.

California Brook Update

- Bernard informed the committee that all the required Public Hearings have been completed and the Selectmen made the final motion last evening to approve the expenditure.

ADJOURNMENT

DiLuzio **moved** to adjourn, and McKelvey seconded, all were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Adjournment at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary