

Town of Harvard Open Space Committee
December 8, 2022, 8:00 am
Minutes

Members present: Franklyn Carlson, Paul Cohen, Brian Cook, Dan Daly, Jim Lee, Rich Maiore, Peter Dorward (Chair)

Non-voting members present: Liz Allard

Also present: Jeff Legros, MRPC

Meeting called to order 8:00 AM

Dan Daly volunteered to do the minutes.

Minutes of 11/10/22

Franklyn moved to approve, Jim seconded. Approved by unanimous vote.

Next meeting: 1/12/22 at 8 AM.

Old Business

List of Potential Active Rec Sites

Jim suggested that 2 of the sites on the list should be removed:

- Carlson, Littleton County Road. HCT is currently negotiating to purchase the property to protect the opens space and agriculture. Linda and Jim walked the property to evaluate its potential as playing fields as requested at the last meeting. Linda agreed that it was not suitable.
- Chipmar, Mass Ave. The model shows there is > 3 acres of level land, but Jim pointed out the level spots were disjointed, and that there was no good spot for playing fields.

The committee agreed to remove these two parcels from the list of potential active rec sites.

Jim indicated he had talked to Paul Willard who suggested the Willard farm would not be suitable as again the level land is disjoint. But he was fine receiving a letter of interest in the property.

Outreach to Owners of Potential Active Rec Sites

Peter asked when the outreach should begin. The committee agreed that it was time to start, and as agreed this would begin with meetings with a handful of names on the list who the committee thought deserved personal explanations.

Peter has 2 names to contact, and said he would do so within the next week. Jim said he had already talked to Paul Willard, and has 2 others to do. Jim asked Rich if he was contacting Warren's, and Rich indicated he would do so – potentially through an intermediary who is close to the family.

Dan, who has assumed responsibility for sending out the letters, asked if the names & addresses on the potential rec site list were accurate. Peter indicated they were not, and suggested using the map/parcel numbers to look up the current owners and their addresses in the assessor's database.

Outreach Letter for Open Space Protection

Dan had previously suggested a letter be sent to the owner's on the Open Space Protection Priority list, and volunteered to write it. He said it was not done, but would have it for the next OSC meeting.

Peter asked who the letter would be sent to. The committee agreed to start with the top 25 parcels on the list.

OSRP Update

Peter asked if anyone had any updates for Section 4. There were none. Peter pointed out that there had been no input for the active recreation part, and asked if the committee wanted to leave in the previous verbiage – which is outdated, or to just remove the entire active rec part.

Dan asked what the deadline for inputs was. Liz pointed out that the agreed to deadline for inputs had passed by, and that the grant from MRPC runs out at the end of the calendar year.

Jeff indicated he plans to have his deliverables completed by the end of the year, but would be available for minor revisions for a bit longer. Jeff encouraged the active rec representatives to contribute to the OSRP update as it will be the plan moving forward for several years. Liz also suggested adding more on agriculture, and Jeff said he would be doing so.

Dan asked Jeff what grants were available for building athletic fields beyond the Park grant where Harvard's demographics make it difficult to win an award. Jeff encouraged trying for the Park grant even the demographics aren't in our favor. He also indicated there were private grants available from other organizations, and offered to forward some suggestions.

Peter asked if anyone had any inputs on the "Progress against 2016 Action Items". There were none. Dan requested a new copy of the 2016 Action Plan, and said he would review and report back.

Jeff then reviewed Sections 6-9.

- Section 6 & 7 – Survey Results and Analysis of Need – are in good shape
- Section 8 – Goals – is completed and he is looking for feedback
- Section 9 - Action plan – he is finalizing

There was a hiccup in getting these sections out to the committee for review as Peter was not aware he had received them. He will send them out immediately after the meeting. Jeff requested all feedback by 12/15/22, so he could complete it by the end of December. Jeff again encouraged adding an analysis of the current situation and future needs for active recreation to the OSRP.

OSC Update to Select Board

Peter reported on the twice yearly update to the Select Board that occurred on 12/6/22. The update included a quick review of the models for open space protection and potential active rec sites, a recap of the search for a softball field site as part of the Select Board's "intermediate plan", and of the CPC/CPIC requests that had been submitted. The remainder of the update was dedicated to a summary of the OSRP survey, including the questions on funding for open space protection and building active rec facilities.

Rich used this as an opportunity to ask his fellow board members about sources of funding, reminding them that this had come up at the previous review in April. This led to a discussion between the Select Board about CPA surcharges. Peter indicated that no decisions had been made by the Select Board, and that they had agreed to revisit it at their next meeting. Rich had had to leave the OSC meeting, so he was unavailable to comment on the Select Board's discussion.

Paul expressed his concern about why such an important discussion took place without first being reviewed by OSC. Peter indicated he had agreed to do the update at Rich's request, and as everything he presented had already been reviewed by OSC, he did not feel it was necessary to do so again. (He did alert the OSC to the upcoming meeting and the topics to be covered via email on 12/3/22). Peter also said it was not his intention to raise the funding question, but that Rich had raised the question as it was outstanding from the previous OSC/SB review.

Jim suggested that OSC members watch the recoding of the 12/6/22 Select Board meeting and to reach out to members of the Select Board with any concerns. Peter further suggested that if OSC members were concerned or wanted to voice their opinions, that they attend the next Select Board meeting for the funding discussion. Liz suggested that in the future, any requests for meetings with the Select Board be deferred until the OSC can review what is to be discussed.

Paul made a motion to adjourn. Jim seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 AM by unanimous vote.

Submitted by: Peter Dorward