

Open Space and Recreation
Tuesday, January 17, 2023
Meeting Minutes

Call to order at 6:08pm

Members present: Connie Afshar, Adam Norman, Dee Riley, Marisa Manley, Maryanne Wetherald

Additional Attendees: Barbara Wrenn, Lislely Good

Adam Norman, co-chair, asked for comments on the minutes from the November 22th meeting. There were no edits recommended and Dee Riley, co-chair, moved to approve the minutes. Connie Afshar seconded. The motion was approved 5-0.

Agenda Items:

Lislely Good and Barbara Wrenn regarding Goodrich Environmental Research

Wild Cohasset was awarded a grant to create a pollinator garden in Wheelwright park. Wild Cohasset had completed a garden at Scituate animal shelter a few years ago, which will be used as a model for what will be done in Cohasset. In addition advisors will help with technical plant selection and they will be native, easy to care for, and drought resistant. This garden will also be used as research on golden ragwort, which will be used as a barrier. The goal is to observe if the golden ragwort can be used as a barrier to prevent other invasive species from entering the garden, as the proposed field in Wheelwright Park was overrun with black swallow wort last season.

Wild Cohasset needs to get town approval for use of the land. The awarded grant should cover some initial watering expenses in the case of severe drought or in the first season, and they will likely use rain barrels to cover the majority of the watering needs.

Maryanne Wetherald suggested that we could use the two trees planted a few years ago by the town, as part of the border with the intent of continuing to revitalize the area. For presenting to the town select board Wild Cohasset will put together some images and plans for the land to present with the goal of having this approved and underway by the end of April.

Adam Norman, co-chair asked what the dimensions will be and Lislely Good said it really depends on how much land the town would allow while also balancing the number of volunteers and cost of water to maintain the garden. The goal would be that the meadow would spread on its own to help keep out invasive species.

There are very few towns that are taking action against invasive plants, and it would be great for Cohasset to set an example by moving forward with this project.

Marisa Manley suggested that we try to get on the select board agenda now, as it may take a month or two to be able to get on their agenda and Maryanne Wetherald volunteered to get in touch with them.

Hingham Plastic bottle bylaw

Adam Norman, co chair, reported that Hingham is trying to ban plastic bottles and has presented this to the Hingham select board. They have gotten support from schools, local residents and some of the stores. The goal would be to promote reusable water bottles, so the town would also put several hydration stations around town.

Maryanne Wetherald also mentioned that the town has been pushing trash cleanup in the downtown due to an increase in trash, and this would likely resonate with that cohort as well.

Maryanne Wetherald suggested that as a town we could use the town cleanup to bring awareness to the town for how many plastic bottles are collected as litter. Marisa Manley mentioned they did something similar a few years ago with safe harbor to estimate how much trash was related to “alcohol and drugs,” and she will go back and find out how they went about counting.

Connie Afshar, co-chair, added that it would be nice to know what happens to our recycling at the transfer station. Deidre Riley said she would reach out to Bryan Joyce to see if he would be willing to speak to that or perhaps come to a future meeting.

GIS mapping:

Maryanne Wetherald reported that Katie Holden is working on this for CCT but more recently Jack Buckley for CSCR also expressed interest in getting some of his students to help finish the map. Maryanne Wetherald is going to meet with all of them to bring this together next week. Connie Afshar, co-chair, also reported that CSCR is launching a small cohort of students on 2/1 with the focus of delivering one or more GIS maps to the OSRC.

Maryanne Wetherald mass trails grant

Maryanne Wetherald reported that she came across a grant due 2/1 for projects relating to trail planning, design engineering, maintenance for existing trails, rehabbing, and funding for maintenance equipment. Deidre Riley stated that because it's a reimbursable grant, we'd have to get town approval for the funds, which would require submitting a proposal to the selectboard. More generally Maryanne Wetherald asked the committee to think about what kind of trails we currently have and what we may be missing. Maryanne Wetherald proposed something around biking or bike safety, which she has heard from residents is a town need.

The committee will think about this grant and some potential projects for the upcoming year, so that OSRC can apply in the future.

Other Business:

Maryanne Wetherald mentioned that Derby Academy had asked about the town cleanup and wanted to know if we were going to do a town cleanup this year. It was suggested that Earth day is on a Saturday this year, so the committee could possibly do it on actual Earth Day. Marisa Manley asked how the committee can increase engagement this year, and hopefully we can discuss this at our next meeting as a goal for this year's cleanup.

Given school vacation week, it was decided the next OSRC meeting will be on 2/28.

Connie Afshar, co-chair, made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dee Riley seconded. The committee voted in favor 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:47pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Marisa Manley