



**TOWN OF ACTON
OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE**

Meeting Minutes

September 1st, 2023

7:30 am VIRTUAL and In Person

Acton Town Hall Room 9, 472 Main Street, Acton, MA 01720

Committee Members Present: Karen O'Neill (chairing meeting), Terry Maitland (co-chair), Paulina Knibbe; Jane Moosbrucker (not member yet), Matt Mostoller (AWD), David Marshall

Committee Members Absent: Michaela Moran (Planning Board Liaison), Brandon Comstock

Non-Committee Members present: David Martin (Select Board liaison), Joe Will, Bettina Abe, Ann Budner of 9 Horseshoe Drive

- I. Meeting is opened by Karen O'Neill (Chairperson) at 7:39 am.
- II. Karen read the COVID-19 Guidance on hybrid attendance options.
- III. Minutes reviewed – Voted and accepted at 7:45 am.
- IV. Priority Parcel Wetherbee – Investigation of the historic value of the 8-9 antenna towers – Karen and Susan Mitchell-Hardt went to the Acton Historical Commission. Bill Klauer mentioned two fires were caused by the towers – there is concern for safety/liability. Towers do not have any *known* historic value. Ray Lyons thinks the towers have historic value but has no evidence. One member believes the towers were a government project related to Draper Labs (Karen said she would follow up in September with him). Letter from Historic Commission – Wetherbee woods have historic value – Captain Thomas Wheeler home site, stone line catchment, STERBA Curtain Array (the towers). The Historical Commission will look more deeply into its history. "Acton Historical Commission supports the purchase and preservation" signed by Bill DICKINSON (chair). Terry mentioned it [Towers] could be a liability and could get removed for that reason. Paulina suggested possibly taking antenna as scrap. Karen said that the Town Manager and Select board will need to be involved in this.
- V. Funding Model for Wetherbee & beyond – Paulina - Task is how to fund the Wetherbee property but the overarching goal is a model to be used for future acquisition - how we funded things in the past – to then create a multi-adaptable model – CPC had presentation about how it was spent, how its funded, where money is from. Paulina mentioned possibility of increasing amount of bonding/bonding capacity. Asked if a Funding Model could be a regular agenda item so Paulina can provide updates. Paulina asked how to find history of projects that involved purchasing and how they were funded. Terry suggested the OSRP (and past ones). Paulina said the most critical thing we have is the Appraisal and hopes the model will be ready for when the appraisal comes and then the numbers can be plugged in. She mentioned money/funding involved will be ACT, CPC, donors, grants, bonding (Part of CPC). Jane mentioned Woodstock ME example of a Land Trust which asked every committee in town for funds and private donations. David Martin said to debrief Andy - he may be a good resource to learn about past funding, David also mentioned the appraisal needs to be done within a year of acquisition so CPC due in October. don't want to waste appraisal – any appraisal will do (got to be certified) – can go with the most recent – Terry said it was updated last month, David said you could use that for a CPC application – Karen asked if it's helpful to meet Ray LYONS (Town Manager/Selectboard to do it) – David said they had over a year ago, no negotiations have been made. Town Manager has had brief discussions with Ray LYONS, but not negotiations. Karen asked if David could request Selectboard to start negotiations, David asked if everyone is confident the CPC application could be done by the deadline, Karen mentioned it is on her to write it (and Andy offered to help). Karen has to

request with CPC. Matt said deadline for CPC projects that are mentioned early enough are not always fully due by fall deadline i.e bonding involvement. Bettina said MASSwildlife would be a potential funding source which may result in the land being owned by MASSwildlife – Bettina has contacts – MassWildlife looks at connectivity so surrounding public lands are preferred – hunting would be allowed –Paulina asked if it's in Brandon's list and it is not, so they would like to add it. Bettina can prove the contact. Mass Outdoor Heritage Foundation non-profit may provide funding.

- VI. Residential Comment on Wetherbee: Ann asked about the Wetherbee as a primary source as a wastewater treatment– potential effluent discharge facility? David mentioned it was a comprehensive study would just be discharge for businesses on 2A hampered BY LACK OF wastewater treatment, it was to provide potential locations, a report not a proposal. Jane mentioned it might be a bargaining chip for getting more money from the Town. Terry mentioned to empty Andy's brain, he has a per dollar for acre based on history, might be 120,000-130,000\$.
- VII. CR for Conant – Matt said it was submitted to the State Aug 16th Terry asked if the contract (Purchase & Sale Agreement) was extended. Matt said yes.
- VIII. No updates on Morrison Farm property
- IX. Comments/Concerns/Announcements: Bettina – heads up Mary Donald 46 Taylor Rd donated 12 acres to Acton Arboretum in 2002 – she is in her 90s and has daughter in VT and will sell her property. It is critical property and has a 5-acre parcel that would help with overflow and be a new entrance. Have conversation with her family about it. 46 Taylor Road is the property.
- X. OSRP – Subgoals:
 - 1. Ensure permanent protection status of all conservation parcels
 - 2. Create more expansive wildlife corridors
 - 3. Maintain communication with key landowners
 - 4. Preserve and protected forested and trees
 - 5. Protect existing open fields, meadows, and Ag parcelsPrevious suggestions: add wetland/rivers corridors or aquatic/riparian
Want to add ponds & address dams. Any suggestions could be sent to Conservation. Will discuss at next meeting to review the comments.

Matt asked about getting the overarching goals to the group – Ian will email overarching goals and show where subgoals fall in – Jane suggested doing a walk with Land Steward – Ian could create more programming for walks – Tom did it through Community Ed/Recreation Dept – perhaps an OSC sponsored walk? Jane wants to expand the list of people who come to walks/visit the woods. Ian suggested bringing educational topics outside like doing a walk that talks about local government and how it operates or about climate change on a local and global scale.
- XI. Ian will send his list of grants! Review with Brandon.
- XII. David Martin – ask if OSC to be present at the Selectboard meeting Sept 11th & 18th for talking about an appraisal for Wetherbee
- XIII. The next meeting is October 6th and will also be hybrid. Karen will not be present (may Zoom) and David Martin will not be present.

Meeting moved to close. Majority voted.

Meeting adjourned at 8:33 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ian Bergemann, Land Stewardship Coordinator, Town of Acton