

Committee Members

Tina Wright, Co-Chair
Denise Legee, Co-Chair
Charlie Ross, Clerk
Andrea Burke, Member
Laura Connolly, Member
Mike Francis, Member
Tara Rice, Member
Jim Wickis, Member
Joanne Williams, Member



TOWN OF MEDWAY

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

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Tuesday, June 7, 2022, 7:00 PM
Medway Senior Center

| Attendance | Tina Wright | Denise Legee | Charlie Ross | Andrea Burke | Laura Connolly | Mike Francis | Tara Rice | Jim Wickis | Joanne Williams |
|------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|
| Present | x | x | x | x | x | | x | x | x |

Denise called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

Brochure update status

Laura stated at the last meeting they came up with universal names for parcels and a numbering system. Charlie will make some more updates soon.

Quick Status Updates

- **Denise:**

Announcements and upcoming meetings

- Denise stated there is a meeting tomorrow night at 7pm via zoom about the Open Meeting Law. All members are encouraged to attend.
- At the last town meeting, Article 16, \$5000 was allocated from CPC funds for trail improvements and extensions. These funds can only be used to create or enhance trails, not for maintenance. Another \$10k was put in the budget for trail maintenance. This fund has more flexibility, so it can be used for anything associated with the trails, brochures, signs, land appraisals, bridge repair, etc.
- Denise stated she sent out the summary IDEA to the committee members and asked them to review it when they get a chance.

Medway Master Plan Task Force (monthly update)

Denise stated they did not have a meeting this month.

- **Laura:**

Laura stated she talked to Julie Harrington, Parks and Recreation Director, about the field behind the VFW. Summer camps use that field and sometimes they rent it out to other towns.

- **Jim:**

- Williamsburg Way Open Space**

- Denise stated they will organize a walk out there before the next meeting.

Charlie stated the grass was pretty tall and poison ivy was noticed. Part of the back loop had a lot of ferns. Dog ticks were noted out there as well. If we want to promote this area, then it would need to be mowed more often and an Open Space sign should be installed. There are three parking spaces there.

- Town-wide treatment of invasives**

- Jim stated he and Bridget held their first class and 11 people came to it. People were very interested, and they will be holding another class on Friday at 10am.

- **Mike (Not Present):**

- Ohnemus DPW discussions re: parking lot**

- Denise reported that Mike said they are still trying to figure out parking next to the police station, but we can put up an Open Space sign as soon as we get them. We just need to decide the best place to put the sign.

- Amphitheater Alternate Village Street Access (continue discussions with condo owners)**

- Not discussed.

- Rail Trail east of Oakland (parking, water station proximity)**

- Not discussed.

- **Tina:**

- Trail from Senior Center to Rail Bed (private parcel permissions)**

- Tina stated she went out to a couple of the houses. She spoke to the residents in the log home and they were amenable to a trail and would like the town to buy that parcel. The other resident was not home but Tina spoke with the neighbor who stated they would talk to the resident about it. She left her name and number for them to call her.

She also left a message for the Army Corp of Engineers.

There is also a small square parcel of land at the back corner of the soccer field that the town does not own. She would like to approach the Select Board about purchasing that piece of land. There had previously been a concern reported about whether it had been used for dumping debris. Charlie stated that, if there is debris there, it doesn't seem to be only restricted to that parcel.

Nearer the rail bed, Mike had been talking with DPW and there had been concern about people walking close to the water supply. Mike was going to check to see how other towns handle that.

- The Willows Trails (schedule walk with Bridget)**

- Action: Tina and Denise will try to schedule the walk with Bridget soon.

- Water Trail (talk with Bridget about getting river cleared)**

- Action: Tina & Denise will follow up with Bridget on this.

- **Joanne**

- Deerfield Open Space property update**

- Following up on Charlie's concern that the western part of the trail around the pond was on private property, Denise emailed Susy Affleck-Childs, Planning & Economic Development Coordinator, on this, asking if the area was surveyed when the trail was put in. **Action: Denise will follow up with Susy about this.** Charlie reports that several GPS apps indicate the trail goes on private property, but a professional-quality GPS or formal survey would be needed to tell for sure. Joanne stated she is skeptical because there are fences towards the back of the property and people usually put fences close to their property line. Charlie expressed the same concern about the roughed-out/not-yet-finished northern loop at the site.

- Trail Safety (follow up with Police Chief)**

- Joanne stated she spoke to William Kingsbury, incoming Chief, and (then) Sergeant Jeffery Watson. They were not aware of some of the trails we have. Officer Watson thought the biggest key to safety is having a lot of people out on the trails at all times. We need to advertise more and encourage people to use the trails. Charlie stated he sent Officer Watson had approached him. Charlie sent him the link to our maps, background on which have been GPS captured and which have not. Officer Watson is working with Fran Hutton Lee, the current GPS coordinator, just as Charlie plans to do once the content of the brochure map is finalized.

- Action: Joanne will follow up with Michael Boynton, Town Manager, about advertising and promoting the trails.**

Tina stated it might be a good idea to distribute something to students before school breaks. Armand Pires, Superintendent, told her he would be happy to do that.

- Discussion: OSC and Town interaction with Medway Trail Club**

- Tina stated that, in response to recent inquiries, she spoke to Dennis Crowley (Select Board Chair), Bridget Graziano (Conservation Agent), and David Travalini (Conservation Commission Chair). Tina told Dennis that she would start a discussion with the Trail Club about notification when work details are happening and to suggest they let the Parks Department know if they would need to clean up after an event. Tina also suggests the Trail Club should notify Bridget by email if they are doing any work near the wetlands.

The Conservation Commission, the Parks Commission, the Select Board, and the School Committee are in charge of various public spaces. Jim asked whom the Trail Club or the Open Space Committee should contact if they have an idea or project for one of those spaces. Charlie stated that the ownership is shown in the online real estate records, maintained on the town websites by the Assessing Department, but that you have to know how they are worded. Tina added that, if a space is near a wetland, the Conservation Commission would need to be consulted. Tina stated if it's just routine clearing or maintenance, they should let the Parks Department know. If they are doing a bridge or something invasive, they should contact the Open Space Committee.

Laura stated she has concerns about the confusion over who is responsible for each parcel. Tina acknowledged that it's confusing, but that town representatives have said that this is the way it is. Joanne later acknowledged that it can be confusing, but that there isn't a difference of opinion.

Laura also expressed concern that there is no record of what is done by the Trail Club. There is an announcement on Facebook about what they plan to do but there is not any follow-up.

Laura also expressed concern about how the Trail Club maintains its Facebook group. Charlie later stated that there seems to be a difference of opinion about what happened in some specific cases, but that should be addressed directly with the Trail Club.

Laura stated there is debris behind her property that has been left there for years. Laura feels there is no transparency.

Joanne stated she feels that Laura is misrepresenting the facts and she is pushing back on behalf of the Trail Club. Joanne stated they work so hard to preserve the value of land as volunteers. To misrepresent facts undermines the ability of the volunteers to do their work.

Joanne disagreed with Laura's comment about there being no transparency. Joanne stated that the Trail Club always goes to the Conservation Commission or the Select Board on projects.

Joanne addressed the comment Laura made about the debris left behind her house. Joanne stated it is common procedure to leave the invasives where they cut them down. This is done so they don't drag the invasives over other areas and spread the invasives (leaves and seeds) even further. Laura reported that she had spoken with Bridget and was told that piling of debris in place should not be the practice, as it can damage existing plant life. It appears there are conflicting understandings of the proper practice.

Tina asked how can these various groups be more transparent, so people know what is going on? Laura suggested that more information is needed on the Open Space page and the Trail Club group. Laura stated she thinks the Trail Club does a lot of positive work but there needs to be record keeping of what has occurred. There should be an ability to look up what was done, when it was done, and who did the work.

Laura also suggested that the Trail Club should also have a mission statement online and a person to contact if they have questions.

Tara stated she agrees with Laura that it is hard to figure out who to contact with questions about projects. She suggested the Trail Club could add files or emails to their website. The general public likes to be able to find quick answers or at least know whom to contact.

Andrea stated that Trail Club is a volunteer organization and people join to do something they love: be outdoors. The type of volunteer it attracts want to be outside and not doing paperwork. She said the trail workers are very passionate and work very hard as it is.

Charlie stated the model that is used in Medway is used in most of the surrounding towns. Specifically, there are volunteer groups who spend a lot of their own time working on projects. The volunteers don't typically write minutes of every discussion, as a volunteer organization follows a different model than government.

Charlie stated people consume information from many places such as podcasts, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and other websites. Charlie stated the Trail Club has a group on Facebook

and it has always had a mission statement on there. He administers the group as part of his role in the club, but he's a volunteer. Since it's a Facebook group (not a page), Facebook allows other members to post information. It would be nice if people volunteered to post. Charlie stated suggestions are welcome from the community, but these volunteer groups cannot be expected to meet the same expectations as town committees.

Laura suggested an approach for documenting work sessions: put a Facebook post up, copy Bridget or the Select Board, bring one sheet of paper to the meetings with date, project, names, and the result. Then take a picture and post it on Facebook.

Joanne stated the Trail Club is a private organization and they are not required to post this information. Tina stated the Trail Club should have some type of record. The plans they are working on should get archived. Joanne stated she can keep a copy of the email she sends out each week. Tina asked that the committee members think about what types of things should be on the Open Space website to help with transparency. For example, it could have a link to the trail club, where to volunteer, etc. Charlie also administers the Medway Open Space page (as part of his OSC duties) and can update the Open Space Committee page on the town website, but again needs people to generate content to be posted. **Action Item: members should think of ways to be more transparent. What information should be posted where? Bring ideas to the next meeting.**

Jim stated this is town land that volunteers are working on. They have the trust of the town's people and if people have ideas and questions, they should be able to know where to go. Maybe we should formalize the ways questions are asked. Charlie suggested having an email address where people can go with questions about the Trail Club.

Approval of the May 3, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Tina made a motion to approve the May 3, 2022, meeting minutes as submitted. Laura seconded the motion. All members stated aye they were in favor and the minutes were approved.

Other items that may come before the committee

- Tara asked Tina about the children's peace garden at Choate.
- The mowing schedule should be put on the agenda for the next meeting. **(Action: add to the agenda.)**

Adjourn

Charlie made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 pm. Tina seconded the motion all members stated aye they were in favor and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,

Tracy Rozak