

Medway Open Space and Recreation Plan Update

Community Forum #1

Tuesday October 3, 2017, 7 - 9pm – Thayer Homestead

Welcome and Overview of OSRP Process

Matt Hayes, Chairman of the OSRP Task Force, opened the meeting at 7:40 pm. Mr. Hayes thanked everyone for coming to the forum. We will go over the history of Medway's OSRP, review where we stand today, and discuss what exactly is an open space and recreation plan. We will break out into small discussion groups and then answer any questions. The finalized plan will be ready by June of next year. Mr. Hayes introduced Denise Legee, David Blackwell, Glenn Trinidad, Paul Mahoney, Paul Atwood, Bridget Graziano, and Susan Affleck –Childs as members of the OSRP Task Force.

Mr. Hayes gave an update of the OSRP Task Force's recent activities. He explained they have created and sent out an Opinion Survey online as well as a paper survey that is available at the senior center, the town hall and the library. The survey is open through October 31, 2017. There will be a total of three community forums - the next one will be held in December and the third one will be held in February or March.

Mr. Hayes introduced Tina Wright, Chair of the Open Space Committee. Ms. Wright stated that the OSRP was resurrected in 2010. One key goal is to purchase available space when it is appropriate. The Town have purchased several areas including 15 acres on Winthrop Street, 8 acres south of Adams Street, 57 acres south of Adams Street surrounding the high school and 50 acres north of Adams Street. Another key goal is open space preservation. They have identified two riverfront town-owned properties that were inaccessible to residents: Bresnahan's Landing Canoe Launch and Fishing Platform and the Amphitheater historic area by Sanford Mills. They coordinated with many volunteers (including Girl and Boy Scouts) and with the support of the BOS, ConCom, CPC, DPS, PEDB, provided access to the River, created a walking path, added a parking area and fencing. Ms. Wright stated we have made great progress in 7 years and would like to see this progress continue over the next 7 years. (*See attached slide show.*)

Mr. Hayes introduced Paul Mahoney, chairman of the Board of Parks Commissioners and a member of the EPFRAC team. Mr. Mahoney stated that back in 2012, there was quite a shortage of fields in town. The Board of Selectman formed a committee to look into this. The committee is called EPFRAC and it stands for Evaluation of Parks, Fields, and Recreational Committee. The EPFRAC is made up of representatives of several groups - Parks Commission, Open Space, ConCom and Selectmen. EPFRAC decided to put in 2 lighted turf fields at the high school. In addition, they came up with a plan to refurbish Choate Park and Oakland which includes removing old equipment, revising the parking lot, adding a water feature and a new entrance. Mr. Mahoney stated that when it is completed this should be a nice show piece for the town. (*See attached slide show.*)

Matt Hayes introduced Jim Wieler, Chairman of the Trails Task Force. Mr. Wieler stated the Trails Task Force has been very busy and showed slides of the 2009 Master Plan and the Trail along Chicken Brook. The Task Force has completed a footbridge across a small stream near the high school as well as the Chicken Brook Boardwalk. There is still more work to do as far as marking the trails and the parking areas. This was a collaborative effort with several other groups

and many of them are in this room tonight. Mr. Weiler thanked the many volunteers and town employees that helped complete these projects. (*See attached slide show.*)

Mr. Hayes stated that an Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP) was first developed in 1996 and updated in 2010. In May of 2017, Town Meeting approved the use of up to \$25,000 in Community Preservation Act funds to update the OSRP. The OSRP Task Force met with several land consulting companies and chose Anne Capra from Conservation Works to spearhead this project.

Mr. Hayes introduced Anne Capra. Ms. Capra thanked everyone for coming and stated it is great to hear how much the community has accomplished and we should be celebrating. Ms. Capra stated she toured all of the properties last week and was very impressed with how clean and well maintained they were. Ms. Capra stated that she would like to engage everyone in a discussion to identify Medway's assets and challenges and then move into a discussion of our open space and recreation needs.

Ms. Capra asked everyone to write down on a piece of paper what open space means to them. Some of the responses were: undeveloped land, wildlife corridor, natural vistas, accessible natural areas, accessible to residents of all ages, dog friendly corridors, land for conservation and recreation. Someone said open space should have an educational component to it. Ms. Capra also added that agricultural land, land managed for forestry, ball fields, tennis courts, and public gathering spaces like Thayer Homestead are also open space.

Ms. Capra then gave instructions for each table to break into groups to identify the places and characteristics of the community that residents enjoy and any issues they felt needed to be addressed. Each group was asked the questions below and to summarize their answers.

1. Where do you live, work and play in Medway?
2. What are some of your favorite places in Medway to recreate?
3. What do you do there?
4. How often do you go there?
5. What makes Medway special/ and or unique to you?
6. Of your favorite open space and recreation spots and /or special places you recognized above, are there any problems, conflicts or issues you experience when you go there? Describe them.
7. Is there one "thing" you wish Medway had to offer that it currently does not?
8. What are some key opportunity areas to pursue for additional open space, conservation, and/or recreation areas in the future?

Summary of Responses

Group 1 - Most of this group were from the west part of Medway - West Street, behind the middle school and Choate Park. They really enjoyed walking on the trails near the high school. They feel the wildlife is an important asset and interesting to most— birds- coyotes, foxes, cotton tails, black squirrels etc. What is special? We like that there is a lot of open space and the town is interested in protecting the spaces. They felt Medway still has a very rural character and a historical component to it. Old mills and such are part of the history.

Medway is a convenient location between Worcester, Boston and Providence. Favorite spots were the fields at the middle school but felt they were only accessible from Holliston Street and they would like to see more access. They would also like spaces for 40 years old and up

and felt a bit marginalized. An area for Tai Chi & Yoga would be nice and people would like to see more access to the Amphitheater area. There are only 3 spaces for parking near Sanford Street. They liked that there are many beautiful birds and fauna but not very good signage. They also felt the number of private property signs make them feel unwelcome. There is no signage of where to put your canoe in the water. Emergency kiosks would be nice if they need help or have cameras. Ms. Capra asked is it because people feel unsafe? They responded that they were more concerned about it being a remote area and they could trip and fall and nobody would be around to help. They also would like to have more family bicycle trails.

Group 2 - Most of this group stated they work from home and enjoyed the sports fields, Choate Park and playgrounds when their children were little. Now that they are older, they like the walking trails and concerts on the common. Some members of the group were not aware of all the available areas. They would like places to walk dogs maybe a trail along the water somewhere. Some of the group would like to see nice vistas, stone walls, greenery and a sense of community and habitat for wildlife. They felt that there was not enough places to take your dog off leash and a lot of the trails and parks are not connected. They also didn't like that large trees seem to be disappearing large and replaced with smaller trees. They would like to see more shady area to sit. They would like a golf course, and a field that is high and flat for flying kites. A skating pond with benches, trails connected to major corridors, more shade in parking areas, benches along trails and a bocce ball court. Their number one priority would be a connection to Idylbrook, Cassidy field and Wilson farm on Lovering Street. They asked if the Idylbrook piece of land that was once used for a tree study is available. Also they feel there are inconsistent dog on leash policies- some of the areas say dogs allowed but others say no dogs allowed.

Group 3 - Most of this groups members lived towards the borders of Millis, Milford and Holliston. Their favorite place was Choate Park & trails. They felt there were a lot of special and unique places and athletics fields for kids. Most of their kids are grown and did not get to experience these places. This group thought Medway was wonderful and did not see many issues. They do wish there was more information sharing across generations. They thought Choate Park could use some cleaning up – too many weeds - not enough water flow- get sludge- asked if it could be made into a swimming pond again. They would like to see trails around Broad Street and the Old Mill part of town. They would like trails that connect to Milford and Millis. They would also like to help maintain farms and the agriculture and asked how they could help the owners.

Group 4 - Most of this group was from the east side of Medway. They felt that walking trails and a canoe launch on the Charles is important. They really liked the special amphitheater and conservation land behind the police station. They felt there was a lack of signage and information about the areas - are they good for walking dogs etc. They are concerned about the litter at Choate Park. They would really like to see more bike paths (rails trails) and more sidewalks on some of the main roads.

There was a brief discussion about some of the areas that might be available in town. The land on the Charles that starts in Bellingham has 4 acres. The land east of the amphitheater behind John Street is very nice. McGovern School has some land behind it that might be a useful area. Paul Mahoney stated this area has been refurbished through an Eagle Scout project. Someone asked about the area near the senior center. There was also a discussion about the need for places where a dog can run free and catch a ball. Also signs at the high school need to be better. Are

dogs allowed or not? Someone suggested maybe allowing “dog times” at certain parks – like 3-5 pm or 7-9 am, etc. Someone suggested they create a dog park.

Ms. Capra stated we need to come up with a seven year action plan. This is just the first forum and she will tailor the next forums based on issues brought up tonight. She will also be looking at the survey data. Someone asked if there will be a synopsis of tonight available on the town’s website or Facebook? Ms. Capra stated she will write up a summary of tonight and also a summary of the survey results. We need to look at everything and put it into an analysis and an action plan. The draft plan will also be available for public comment. In addition, Ms. Capra will be talking to the various board and committee members to get their input. Ms. Capra thanked everyone for coming out tonight and is looking forward to the next forum.

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