



OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

March 3, 2023

7:30 am

VIRTUAL

Members Present: Andy Magee (Chair), Matthew Mostoller, Alissa Nicol, Karen O'Neill, David Marshall.

Members Absent: Terry Maitland, Michela Moran.

Town of Acton Staff Present: Mike Gendron, Bettina Abe, David Martin (Select Board Liaison)

Non-Committee Members Present: Susan Mitchel-Hardt, Joe Cooney, Joe Will, Alexandra Wahlstrom (Acton Water District), Jane Moosbruker.

I. Opening

- A. Chair Andy Magee opened the meeting at 7:35 a.m. and noted that the meeting was being held remotely in accordance with guidance from the Aton Board of Health, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and in accordance with public law extending certain COVID 19 related measures.
- B. Andy reviewed several procedural issues around agenda postings. Specifically, when filing the agenda with the Town Clerk it must be sent as a Word document. Once the Clerk has accepted and posted the agenda Andy circulates it to the Committee. Agendas must be posted 48 hours in advance of the meeting. Since the Committee meets at 7:30 am on Fridays, it must be posted by close of business on Tuesday. Note also that the Clerk occasionally posts the meeting as "p.m." so whoever files must make sure the time is posted correctly.
- C. Terms of Committee membership: Andy got the terms from Clerk. Everyone good until 2024 or 2025. Andy had apparently never been formally re-appointed to his current term, which ends June 30 of this year. Dave Marshall has not taken the Open Meeting Law or Ethics courses and has not been formally sworn in. David will contact Mike or Bettina for instructions how to do that. Alissa's, Michaela's, and Karen's terms expire 2025. David Martin reported that when appointed, they are rounded to end of current fiscal year.

II. Minutes

- A. Minutes of January 6, 2023, and February 3, 2023. Regarding the minutes of January 6, 2023, Alissa pointed out that there was a PowerPoint presentation by Pat Hearn of the Agricultural Commission at the meeting of 1/6/2023 that should be referenced in the minutes. Karen noted she is not on the email shell and therefore did not receive the draft



minutes until late. Matt Mostoller did not see both sets of minutes. Alissa did not get them on the shell, but she got them on her Gmail account. Motion to approve the minutes of January 6, 2023 and February 3, 2023 as amended. Roll call vote: Mostoller abstains, otherwise approved all aye.

- B. Email Shell. Bettina explained how to get people added into a committee email shell. This requires diligence on the part of each Committee member to: (i) complete both ethics and OML trainings; deliver proof/certificates of training to the Clerk; (ii) get sworn in, in person by the Town Clerk; (iii) ensure that the member is added to the email shell by the I.T. Department; (iv) ask the Clerk to email Mike Gendron to remind the Clerk and I.T. Department that the committee member needs a new Town of Acton email.
- C. Town of Acton Email. The Town is trying to have all committee members have a Town email address. Committee members must remember to check new Town of Acton email daily or ask I.T. to set up forwarding of Town of Acton emails to their home email which can be risky, as some Town emails can end up in personal email spam boxes. Best is for all committee members to check their Town of Acton emails every day to stay up to date on Town business. The many Town email shells also get important email blasts to “All Boards and Committees.” So, if your email is not in the shell, you will miss communications. Please communicate with staff immediately if there is a problem with your Town emails and copy your Chair.

III. Regular Business

- A. Open Space Committee and Recreation Plan. Mike Gendron reported that he, Planning Staff Member, Nora Masler, and Bettina Abe met with Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT) staff yesterday to discuss their electronic land prioritization tool, Story Map: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/013f5a349e984d63a872549a4e427467> Please review their Process Documentation Report to understand the methodology: https://www.svtweb.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/SuAsCo_Regional_Prioritization_Plan_Process_Documentation.pdf This methodology will be very helpful during next stage of writing Acton’s updated OSRP. SVT Story Map tool uses an impressive methodology, taking into account all the important factors that go into land prioritization and evaluation. It is a comprehensive tool for prioritizing open space. Town staff have ideas how to get input from the public during this stage of prioritization Acton’s remaining open space.
- B. Agricultural land prioritization. Soils and prioritization and inventory of Acton’s Agricultural lands is being undertaken by Pat Hearn with assistance from Agricultural Commissioner, Morene Bodner and ACT President Susan Mitchell-Hardt with their detailed knowledge of farms including equestrian properties.
- C. Community Preservation Act Funding. The OSC asked for \$600k to be added to this year’s set aside. The Community Preservation Committee has made a preliminary



recommendation of \$700k, which is a promising and welcome surprise. Alissa asks about town meeting presentation by CPC. Andy will not attend town meeting this year as he will be out of town. Not sure who will make this presentation. It may be either the CPC Chair, the Select Board Liaison, or an OSC member.

- D. Review - Triangle Farm. No updates. Nothing on Zillow. Senator Jamie Eldridge is following this potential land transaction closely.
- E. Review - 549 Main Street. There has been continued conversation/negotiation with the property owners and Acton Water District (AWD). Matt M. states that they are continuing to work on drafting the CR. The AWD Annual meeting vote to approve the transaction will occur on Wednesday, March 15, 2023 at 6pm at RJ Grey auditorium. A 2/3 vote in favor is required. The Town vote will occur at the Acton Town Meeting scheduled to begin May 1, 2023.
- F. Review - Morrison Farm Conservation Restriction (CR). The Select Board did not approve taking the CR to this year's annual Town Meeting
- G. Review – Wetherbee Street parcel. To be discussed in Executive Session.

IV. New/Special Business

- A. Joe Will asks if Zoom meetings will be available after March 31, 2023. The MA House of Representatives passed a bill to allow it; the MA Senate has not. Governor still needs to sign into law. So please plan for in person meeting for April. The next OSC meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 7 and will be in person unless otherwise noticed.
- B. Susan reminded the Committee that the ACT Annual Meeting will occur Sunday, March 12 at 1:00 pm at the Acton Town Hall. Tom Tidman will be awarded the Carol Holley Conservation Award.

V. Executive Session

Matt M made the motion to go into Executive Session to discuss the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property located at 19 and 35 Wetherbee Street, Acton, under Purpose 6, as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body, and to come out of said session in order to close the regular meeting, and to include Susan Mitchell-Hardt and Joe Cooney of ACT, Alexandra Wahlstrom of AWD, and staff members Mike Gendron and Bettina Abe. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote. Other meeting attendees exited the meeting and the Zoom recording was stopped.

The Executive Session ended at 8:15 am.



VI. Motion to conclude regular meeting unanimous.

Next meeting April 7, 2023, at 7:30 am.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- Draft meeting minutes of January 6, 2023, and February 3, 2023.

Respectfully submitted, Bettina D. Abe, Conservation Assistant

Voted in the Affirmative April 7, 2023