



TOWN OF ACTON
OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
February 2nd, 2024

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 Co-Chair, Full Member), Terry Maitland (Co-chair, Full Member), David Marshall (Full Member), Matt Mostoller (Full Member, AWD), Brandon Comstock (Full Member), Bettina Abe (Associate Member), David Martin (Select Board Liaison), Michaela Moran (Planning Board Liaison)

Committee Members Absent: Jane Moosbruker (Associate member)

Non-Committee Members present: Susan Mitchell-Hardt (ACT), Alexander Wahlstrom (AWD), Mike Gendron (Conservation Manager), Ian Bergemann (Land Stewardship Coordinator), Ray Lyons (Attorney representing the Moritz Property)

- I. Meeting is opened by Karen O'Neill (Chairperson) at 7:34 am.
- II. Review of minutes from OSC meeting on Friday, Jan 5th, 2024 were posted.
- III. Status of property Conservation Restrictions
 - a. Mike provided an update about the status of the MOU for 549 Main St, which is under review by the Conservation Commission
 - b. Susan provided an update about the Anderson Land CR – Dillis & Roy need to finish combined survey. Susan will also be following up with the State about 4 Piper Ln.
- IV. Schedule Change for OSC
 - a. Karen asked if the OSC would like to change the start of the meeting from 7:30 am to potentially 8:30am; following an inquiry by a committee member. The members' general consensus was to keep it at 7:30 am.
- V. Review status of Wetherbee/Moritz Property
 - a. Mike is working with the Town manager to begin scheduling meetings with property owner and attorney. David Martin said the Town Manager & Town Counsel will be meeting. Ray Lyons noted the Town wants the Short-Wave towers to be removed. The property owner would remove them; however, the contractor would like to remove them in the Fall for safety purposes. Susan highlighted the anthropogenic structures on the property such as stone-lined catchment and associated improved natural spring. David Martin reminded everyone about the timeline and that next month [March] he would bring it up at Select Board to be a Warrant Article. David Martin said that we may need to present this project to CPC and ask them for support with bonding. He noted OSC would need their approval before Town Meeting. For Town Meeting, OSC needs to have a funding package ready to present (and CPC). 3 months til Town Meeting. Mike followed up that he spoke with the Staff Liaison, Kaila Sauer, for CPC about a specific presentation about the Moritz Property and its timeline. He can assist with getting this on the CPC agenda.
- VI. Review grant opportunities
 - a. CPC application was submitted. MVP Grant's EOI was submitted. Brandon mentioned 2 small grant opportunities for outreach which the applications are on a rolling basis. He also mentioned the Wharton Trust – less than 15k – due in March. The LAND grant – Brandon spoke in the Fall with contact, February should be new cycle (Mike mentioned this grant will require an approved OSRP – some sections are already with a copy editor and by April the draft will be sent to the State and Select Board). Acres for

America – hosted webinar recently and noted that large parcels are different for each community, goals of their grant align with our goals. EOI is due at end of February. We need to do this through Easy Grants (who should make the account?). Grant asks for title, abstract, map. – Ian to work together with Brandon on EOI. Ian create account. Ian create map. 7 different maps. Ian, Mike, and Brandon will chat about this. Point of geographic distribution – only one funded project in MA. Bettina mentioned a wildlife corridor under RT 2 by Moritz and extend into Nashoba Brook green belt might be a good future project to do with DPW/MassDOT. A financial model is important. Brandon mentioned the presenter, Matt from Upstream Carbon, told him the top drivers for threat to development are no wetlands, flat, and 35% frontage. Susan asked if it may require hunting – but the webinar did not disclose that hunting is required. Connectivity is relatively high and provides migration. There is hunting nearby in the State-owned Wildlife Management Area. Ray Lyons asked if he could have a copy of the grant chart to show the owners. He also highlighted that developers would be eager because the property is readily developable. 2 other NFWF grants were discussed, America the Beautiful Challenge & Northeast Forests and Rivers Funds.

VII. Discuss fundraising

- Susan mentioned there is a 4-person team meeting. Mike from SVT mentioned that SVT will be following up about support. Susan mentioned ACT will be handling flyers, social media, outreach, and their newsletter. Karen asked if Susan could provide regular updates from that fundraising team.

VIII. Discuss the Concord prison land change

- Terry mentioned Chapter 313 swapping in 2008 (sent from Andy Magee). Bettina asked in the chat “what does that mean? Chap 313? Implications for preserved open space?”. Terry answered that these lands shall be held for conservation, agriculture, forestry, and approved passive recreation. Bettina mentioned this potential connectivity should be mentioned to CPC.

IX. Any updates on Donald land or Triangle Farm

- Morrison Farm – AgCom will be presenting the CR on Monday to the Select Board. It will exclude the historic buildings. David Martin spoke that last time the Select Board was in favor of conserving the land.
- Donald property – Friends of Acton Arboretum met last week and the President, Phoebe Conant, reached out to the Donalds and asked if Mary Donald would like to continue to be on the Board of Directors. There have not been any indicators on the sale of the property.
- Susan mentioned that Jamie Eldridge asked if there's anything to help on the Wetherbee/Moritz property or Morrison Farm CR.

X. Comments/Concerns/Announcements:

XI. The next meeting is Friday, March 1st, 2024 at 7:30 am and will also be hybrid.

Meeting moved to close. Terry motioned to adjourn, Michela seconded. Unanimously adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 8:36 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Ian Bergemann, Land Stewardship Coordinator, Town of Acton