

Meeting of the Open Space and Recreation Committee

Monday, May 22, 2023, 4pm.

Room 5 of Town Hall, 10 Central Street, Manchester by the Sea, MA.

Members present: O. Hayes (co-chair), H. Bethel, P. Mitchell, C. Rising (remote), T. Cowman (remote) and S. Linehan

Members absent: S. Gang (co-chair)

Staff present: E. Ware, Interim Town Planner

The meeting started late due to technical issues relating to the Zoom connection. At 4:22 the meeting started.

O. Hayes stated that the ability to parking and hike out of the Manchester Housing Authority's (MHA) Newport Park Housing development on Pine Street has hit an impasse. When the site was acquired by the Town of Manchester and a portion given to the MHA, it was given with the townspeople having rights to use the property to access the Powder House reservation. In the 1960s, the MHA constructed their units on the access easement/fire road on the property. This violation of the easement results in the inability to access parts of the reservation and limits parking for hikers using the reservation. E. Ware stated that she had spoken to Irene Frontier, the Executive Director of the MHA, and would try to set up a meeting between the MHA and the OSRC to discuss this issue and try to get some resolution.

The OSRC discussed the fact that Mary Reilly was involved, then former town planner Sue Brown and now E. Ware, the interim town planner. There was a meeting on site with the Town Engineer, who indicated that the buildings were constructed on the right of way.

Goals and objectives of the Open Space Plan.

It was noted that there was detailed inventory of land protected and not protected. There were concerns that Essex County Club did not have a restriction on it. It was also noted that the MAPC inventory and map of land of conservation interest was wrong.

Legal counsel needs to review 4-5 (12 properties in total) properties in the Western Woods for access and have legal counsel review with the Town Administrator's approval.

There was discussion of one property on Highland Avenue that owned property across the street that would be an excellent trailhead for hiking. The Davis Family Trust property could be approached by OSRC members or perhaps the MECT. The "nub" across the street from the Davis's carriage barn house would be enough parking spaces for two cars at the base of a trailhead. With Highland Ave a private roadway, it appeared that all properties along the road owned the roadway. After some discussion, it was thought that MECT and/or Jeffrey Bodmer Turner might be good people to approach the Davis Family Trust. It was suggested that a letter might be a good approach, however O. Hayes would speak with Jeffrey Bodmer Turner about the approach. C. Rising agreed to go with MECT and that the direct approach is not the best option. E. Ware explained the Derelict Fee Statute.

There was a discussion of the Highland Avenue neighborhood and MECT's land ownership in the area. It was noted that there is a brand-new house on Highland Avenue, with an access easement, with MECT owning all around it. H. Bethell and S. Linehan noting that updated information was needed.

There was a short discussion of a potential pollinator patch in the Winthrop field. C. Rising was to coordinate with Chapmans and the school.

There was a short discussion of the town's infrastructure issues, including water quality and PFAS.

H. Bethell indicated that coordination between boards and committees is an issue, and that Sue Beckman has been working to consolidate work between boards and committees.

O. Hayes indicated that there is a lot going on, particularly with the resiliency committee and issues of sea rise levels .

It was decided that the next meeting would be June 19 at 4pm.

P. Michell made a motion to adjourn. H. Bethell provided a second and all voted in favor.

Submitted by: E. Ware, Interim Town Planner