

Open Space Preservation Committee
Parks Advisory Committee
Tuesday June 19, 2018 7:00 PM
Mansfield Town Hall Conference Room B

Minutes - FINAL

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:05

2. Roll Call

Attending: Jim Morrow (Chair), Vicky Wetherell, Ken Feathers (secretary), Quentin Kessel, Tom Harrington, Sue Harrington

Town Staff Present: Jennifer Kaufman

3. Review of Minutes

The Minutes of May 15, 2018 regular meeting were approved with correction of a duplication in the attendance list (moved Kessel, second, T.Harrington)

The minutes of the May 11, 2018 special meeting were approved (moved Soares, second, Morrow)

4. Opportunity for Public comment

Sonya Conrad, Mansfield resident, was present and made a presentation (listed under new business) pertaining to the potential to develop a dog park in town.

5. New Business

• *Dog Park*

Sonya Conrad made a presentation about an initiative, by an informal group in town, to establish a dog park. The group is seeking the Committees' endorsement as a support for enabling fundraising. The proposed dog park would be a half acre fenced area divided into space for large and small dogs and is intended to provide a place for dog owners to meet, gather, and socialize while dogs can be allowed to run off-leash, as opposed to the on-leash policy for other recreational areas in town. Individual owners would be responsible for their pet's behavior. The group would be self-funding and is seeking only minimal town support; the location is yet to be determined.

MOTION: (Moved by S. Harrington, second by Harrington, unanimous adoption)

"The Committees support the ad-hoc dog owners group's desire to develop a dog park in Mansfield."

• *September Road Conservation Easement*

The group discussed proposed voluntary conservation easements, associated with development of a house. Because the house is on a lot of record the easements did not previously go through the normal review process in the way a subdivision proposal would. The easements include wetlands protection and part of the Nipmuck Trail. It was the group's opinion that the wetlands preservation was appropriate. The group considered a conservation easement for the trail to be not the best alternative and thought that instead the landowner should consider granting a trail license. There is potential future rerouting of the trail segment involved, when the larger trail network is considered, and a trail license would avoid the possibility of an orphaned, no longer needed easement remaining on the town records.

• *Fall Park Programs*

Upcoming Fall programs in the parks, associate with Walktober and otherwise, were discussed. The Harringtons are leading three walks, at Moss Sanctuary, Merrow Meadows, and Schoolhouse Brook Park. There will be a Bat walk. There will be a taste of Mansfield event.

6. Continuing business

- *Hanks Hill Road Open Space Dedication*

The group received a report on the recent Town Council hearing. It was felt that the discussion became focused on the funding of ongoing care rather than the value of the property donation as adding to the preservation of land resources in Town. Town staff indicated they would be meeting with the donor to draft an agreement that addressed concerns raised in the hearing, potentially by refocusing the provision of ongoing care to be covered by a donation to the Town's Open Space Fund.

- *Open space preservation committee/parks advisory committee charge update*

The group received a verbal report of a Committee on Committees meeting at which all natural resource related committee chairs described their committee's unique roles. The group discussed the relationship of the various committees and their overlapping but different roles. The draft proposed combined committee charge was reviewed and minor wording changes were made.

MOTION: (Moved by Wetherell, second by Kessel, unanimous adoption)

"The Open Space Preservation Committee and the Parks Advisory Committee recommend the Mansfield Committee on Committees consider merging these two committees into a single committee to be named the *Parks and Natural Resources Committee*, and recommend that the full council adopt as this merged committee's charge the June 19 draft charge."

- *Connecticut Bird Atlas*

Sue Harrington reported that observations were continuing and being posted on a data platform. It appears that the data will be very accessible for analysis. Many, but not all, observers are honoring the earlier request for data to be coded by specific parcel, to allow later identification of bird resources specifically on Town or Joshua's Trust lands.

7. Executive session in accordance with CGS section 1200(6)(D)

- *Sale or purchase of Real Property*
- *Discussion of possible site selection*

Entered executive session 8:17 PM (moved Morrow; seconded Wetherell)

Exited executive session at 8:22

8. Communications

Communications were noted as listed on the agenda.

9. Other

- Town staff recommended that the group consider establishing regular joint meetings of the Town's natural resource focused committees, using Sustainable CT as an umbrella framework. This was well received by the group.
- The draft zoning regulations include a concept for a riparian overlay zone and this section was recommended for review; further information may be found in Conservation Commission minutes.
- S. Harrington reported that 6 people participated in the trail day hike to 50 foot.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 (move Kessel, second T. Harrington)

Respectively Submitted
Ken Feathers, Secretary