

Northfield Open Space Committee

Minutes, Jan. 15, 2013

Town Hall – Planning Board Room

Items in italics require action prior to next meeting.

Present: Mike Barry, Sue Handren, Joanne McGee, Sue Ross, Kate Rossiter, Jenny Tufts, Jerry Wagener, Chair.

The meeting opened at 7:35.

1. Adoption of agenda: Two additions: Recreation Commission's proposal and Citizen Stewardship Award. Revised agenda adopted.

2. Approval of minutes: The minutes for Nov. 27, 2012, were approved. Kate/Jenny 6-0.

3. Recreation Commission proposal: Sue Handren distributed an overhead view of Northfield Elementary School and the land behind it. Because of the desperate need for fields, the Recreation Commission is exploring the feasibility of using the town-owned 6.8 acres behind the elementary school for baseball and softball fields. Despite the steep drop off which separates these acres from the land directly behind the school, access is possible. The acreage is a giant thicket, largely unexplored with possible wetlands. Water, electricity, and sewer are available. The steep hill could be graded to provide a sledding hill. Mike Barry commented that, if wetlands are not a problem, a logger could take everything for biomass fuel. An environmental engineering firm would provide an estimate of recreation capabilities of the land. *Sue Ross will give Sue Handren the name of the company that the Ridge Association used, and Jerry will contact Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust for a possible name. Mike will talk to the Conservation Commission for a site visit. Kate will give Sue Handren contact info for John Lepore.* The committee also discussed funding ideas, including CPA money. The CPA application is due Jan. 20; *Sue Handren will talk with Ruth Potee.*

4. Member comments:

Jerry – 1) DCS Melissa received the revised plan. 2) Jerry attended the Kiwanis talk about open space to support Willa Caughey, Americorps from Mount Grace, who talked about the Town Forest.

Jenny – 1) will attend the 1/22 CPA meeting. 2) FERC relicensing process will hold public meetings Jan 31. *Sue will email info to us.* 3) Climate Reality Project meets Jan 25 at the library from 7 to 8:30 pm.

Joanne – Commented on activity with Willa Caughey in Town Forest. John O'Keefe will lead a walk in the spring. *Jerry will send some sign design ideas to Mike Barry and the ConsCom.*

Sue R. – East Northfield Water Co sent out dramatically-increased water bills.

Mike – 1) Forestry groups representing landowners, wood products, and forestry in Massachusetts have joined as the Massachusetts Forest Alliance. *Mike will email info about the annual meeting Feb 9 in Marlborough.* 2) DCR is organizing forest management activities statewide.

Kate – Community garden group is still looking for land, but hopes to have something by spring.

Jerry again – 3) Master Plan Steering Committee met with the consultants. Group discussed an expanded steering committee: possibly a “roundtable”. 4) Robert Hall from the Planning Board is the new member of the Open Space Committee. Welcome aboard, Bob!

5. **Citizen Stewardship Award:** The committee voted to award the Community Stewardship Award to Bob Pasteris for his passion, vision, and work on the energy committee and success at getting Northfield the status of Green Community, which qualifies the town for certain grants. Joanne/Sue 6-0. *Jenny will get the plaque updated and notify Bob and the Selectboard.*

6. **2014 Budget request:** It was decided to level fund our request at \$1200 with \$400 for trail and project signage and \$800 for printing and mailing the revised plan and other projects. Jenny/Sue 6-0

7. **Adjournment:** The next meeting will be March 19, 2013. If we hear from Melissa about the 2012 OSRP, we might meet in February.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne McGee