

**TOWN OF WINDSOR  
MILL BROOK OPEN SPACE STEERING COMMITTEE  
AUGUST 23, 2018  
LUDLOW ROOM – TOWN HALL**

**UNAPPROVED MINUTES**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

Present: Hilary Carpenter Steven Fraysier, Meg Harvey, Nigel Pepin, and Aaron Szotka,

Staff Present: Town Manager, Peter Souza and Town Planner, Eric Barz,

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

George Slate, 74 Ethan Drive, made a range of suggestions, ideas and comments for the open space. Some included: opportunity for future Eagle Scout projects, improvements can be phased-in over time, perhaps clubhouse could be used to meet emergency shelter needs, convert clubhouse building to small senior housing units, please do not duplicate Northwest Park, perhaps plant hemlocks as we are losing them in other town parks/open space, consider community gardens, identify any restrictions under overhead power lines, butterfly gardens/meadows, consider starting a "Mill Brook endowment fund" for future private and community donations. In terms of 72 Mack Street property, he suggested donating it to WILA or create a "brick museum" as that is near the historic Mack brickyard. He further suggested getting the volunteer "environmental resource inventory team" to evaluate the property's environmental attributes. If the town is to own/operate the clubhouse he would prefer the uses not be in competition with local businesses. Mr. Slate also noted the town acquired the property through a stepped - transaction involving an independent non-profit conservation entity. Other suggestions and comments included: maintain ponds and water quality as they are attractions, limit fencing along perimeter of property, perhaps have some paved trails combined with natural soft surface trails, and open field areas need to be mowed at least once a year to limit reforestation and invasive plants. He suggested the committee should inform the other persons interested in volunteering for the steering committee of planning activities as well as add 'community ideas' on the town's website for all to see. Mr. Slate also noted that members may want to review the original planning document created when Northwest Park was first initiated.

Cora Lee Jones, 1171 Matianuck Avenue, stated she is pleased the town acquired the property. She does not envision another Northwest Park and would like low activity open space with mowed areas to manage the field areas.

**3. REVIEW OF OPEN HOUSE EVENT**

Staff and committee members reviewed the open house event held on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. All thought it went well with approximately 45 residents of all ages attended over the 2 hour period. It was noted that attendees were from all parts of town. Committee members felt the layout of the event was

done well as were the exercises to gain citizen input. Staff handed out a list of suggestions and comments attendees made at the event (see attached.)

Town Manager Souza stated he was looking forward to the committee being able to start to identify common themes as the basis for developing guiding principles and land management recommendations. This work will be able to start in earnest during September after the next open house and survey results start to be collected.

Committee members suggested perhaps staff could create a short video or a few 'story boards' to help introduce and explain how the town acquired the property and got to this point in the process. Town Manager stated they would look at creating a few 'story boards'. A committee member suggested perhaps having some water and light refreshments for the next open house as well as trying to better 'mark or identify' 72 Mack Street and the clubhouse entrance. Staff will look into both suggestions.

#### **4. REVIEW OF DRAFT PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY**

Staff presented for review a revised questionnaire or survey tool which incorporated committee comments from the August 10, 2018 meeting. Committee members made several changes and refinements. Staff will work to update the survey and potentially have hard copies available for the upcoming open house. The goal is to have the survey placed on the town's website by Labor Day. This would allow the survey to be on-line for approximately three weeks. Staff will use social media and other means to inform the public of the on-line survey.

#### **5. OTHER BUSINESS**

The Committee set the next two meeting dates as September 6<sup>th</sup> and September 20<sup>th</sup> starting at 6:00 p.m. Staff will confirm a meeting room. Steve Fraysier noted he will not be able to attend the September 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. Both meetings will be used to review community input and to begin to identify common themes.

#### **6. MINUTES**

MOVED by Mr. Szotka, seconded by Ms. Carpenter, to approve the August 10, 2018 meeting minutes as presented.

Motion Passed 5-0-0

#### **7. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned by consensus at 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter Souza  
Town Manager

Map Exercise:

- What are your plans for the overgrown shrubbery abutting Scherer Ridge property?
- Strongly prefer no mountain bikes in park - ruining trails, especially on sloped terrain
- Keep land open – only walking – no biking
- Scout projects to help maintain
- Rent out building to groups for parties, etc. (helps to pay for upkeep of land)
- Lease facility as brewery restaurant
- Use building for social events – rent for some revenue
- Walking trails
- Dog park
- Skating rink
- Fix bridges
- Open off leash dog area
- Fire works events
- Camping
- Hiking
- Mill trails
- Fix several bridges
- Permit picnic areas – such as done in Colt State Park, Bristol, RI – small source of revenue for maintenance
- Fix fence along parking lot – east side
- Pavilion to rent out for private parties (revenue)
- Walking paths
- Picnic area
- Use large building for banquets or events
- Winter ice skating on ponds – one for hockey and one for free skate
- Bush hog/mow every 2 years – do not remove trees
- Mow some sections 6x/year – mow almost all area 1x/year to keep the space open
- Plant more trees
- Remove overgrown shrubs and weeds – especially dangerous ones
- Rent out house and buildings
- Use building for small parties / get-togethers

General Comments:

What do you think?

- Consider how to make it accessible by all abilities – parking is near hilly section and no parking near flat area
- Disc Golf. Use the hills incorporated into the natural terrain and woods and appeal to the under 35 crowd
- Picnic area at clubhouse
- Maintain vistas through selective mowing/vegetation management
- Be sure the location is widely publicized and the way to get to Mill Brook is known by all -- promotion
- Butterfly garden to attract pollinators
- Manmade and natural bike trails
- Boy scout camping and service projects
- Keep mix of meadows and forested areas
- Grassland bird/mammal habitat
- Keep invasive plants under control using selective herbicide application
- Access from Mack Street
- Strategically placed benches (for sitting)
- Trim trees
- Clean up existing walkways
- Level some areas out
- Gazebo
- Trail map
- Make sure all the trails are clean and walkable (safe)
- Provide maps for all the trails
- Will the property be opened always? Will there be a time schedule?
- Complete the bridges