

## Open Space Task Force

### Minutes

**February 13, 2025**

Present: Jim Leahy, chair; Becci Backman, vice chair; Jane Gifun; Julia John, Mike Lindstrom, Doug Cummings, Floyd Greenwood, Kim Perry, Ben Meade

The meeting was called to order by Mike Lindstrom at 7:06PM

#### **Land Acquisition Update**

The Committee was informed that a verbal agreement had been reached with the owner of 92 Tewksbury Street to purchase 3.53 acres of land to be placed in the care and custody of the Conservation Commission. Both a survey and 21E Environmental assessment had been completed and came back clean. Next steps were to begin the process of Town Council drafting a purchase and sale agreement. The homeowner at 92 Tewksbury must also file a subdivision plan with the Planning Division in order to sell 3.53 acres to the Town for open space purposes.

The Task Force was informed that members Mike Lindstrom and Becci Backman had met with the homeowner of 86 Tewksbury Street to potentially purchase a small sliver of .04 acres along the river to help create potential connection from 92 Tewksbury Street towards Pole Hill. Any additional land beyond .04 acres would no longer maintain a conforming lot for the homeowner. The group discussed the option of pursuing this discussion further now with 86 Tewksbury or after closing on the larger portion of 92 Tewksbury Street.

Member Jane Gifun had offered to try and make a connection with neighbors who may know the owner of 84 Tewksbury Street to begin a conversation about a potential land purchase or potential conservation restriction.

#### **Conservation Tree Donation Program**

The group received a brief presentation on a tree donation program that was being piloted between the town tree committee and Weston Nurseries. Program allows residents to make a donation that would purchase native conservation grade trees to be donated to the Town of Andover to be planted in appropriate locations on conservation properties.

Paul Sanborn and Mike Murray had approved the list of plantings that residents could choose to donate. Several concerns were raised by the Task Force relative to these trees being detrimental to controlling the deer population. Task Force members questioned

whether this program was in conflict with the Forest Stewardship Plan that was presented previously by Mike Murray.

### **Open Space and Recreation Plan Update**

The Open Space and Recreation Plan last completed in 2018 is required by the State to be updated in order for Andover to remain eligible for several major state grants. Ben Meade described the process as an update and not a rewrite. Very little of the history will change. Many of the updates would focus on ADA initiatives, the Shawsheen Master plan, and land acquisition updates. There was discussion of the OSTF involvement in assisting in writing these new sections especially around land acquisition.

### **Open Space Task Force Charge Section 1 - *Identify actions to improve parcels already owned by the Town***

The Task Force was asked to develop a list of priorities and action items at a future meeting around improving parcels already owned by the Town, as laid out in the Task Force Charge. Doug Cummings asked that Conservation staff put together a list of highlighted properties to discuss that includes location, needs and concerns, as well as opportunities for improvement. There was discussion about the Task Force's role in improving these areas that included trail maintenance, invasives, protection, education, and advocacy. Ben and Mike committed to a document be created and emailed to Task Force members in advance of the next meeting.

### **Conservation Updates**

Ben Meade discussed the division's work improving kiosks and signs as well as the need for additional land stewards. Ben and Mike provided a quick recap of Winterfest that had taken place on 2.2.25. Another paddle day in collaboration with Andover Trails had also been scheduled for Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup>.

### **Minutes Approval and Adjournment**

The meeting minutes from the December 12, 2024 meeting were unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:50pm.