



TOWN OF

HARWICH



732 Main Street
Harwich, MA 02645

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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HARWICH CONSERVATION COMMISSION

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2017

DONN B. GRIFFIN ROOM
HARWICH TOWN HALL

6:00 PM

JOINT PRESENTATION OF CONSERVATION AND PLANNING
REGARDING TOWN OF HARWICH OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

MINUTES

Harwich Conservation Administrator, Amy Usowski and Harwich Town Planner, Aly Sabatino Presented an Open Meeting Power Point Presentation Regarding Town of Harwich Open Space and Recreation Plan

History and Purpose of the OSRP

- First adopted in 1998; 2016 revision is 2nd update (David Spitz, previous Planner participated in previous editions).
- Incorporates info and recommendations from the 2011 Local Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan. *Enables grant procurement.*
- Includes assessment of current open space and recreation needs, a statement of goals and objectives to fill the Town's needs, and an action plan to meet these goals.
- Purpose; lay out a plan for management of existing town land/facilities and lay framework for how to select new parcels/manage them.
- Approval of the OSRP makes the Town eligible for grant funding.

Accomplishments since 2010 OSRP (Since last revision of the OSRP in 2010)

- Priority list of new acquisitions/checklist to evaluate potential new properties
- Connectivity with other conservation land
- 9 new parcels with 57+ new acres of land
- 2 new Land Management Plans and 10 parcel stewardship report
- Muddy Creek Bridge (*Funded, planned and implemented*)
- Addition of critical habitat type
- Making Town-owned parcels more ADA accessible
- (*First OSRP 1998; New Check List; Critical Habitat For Several Species*)

Goals and Objectives of the 2017 OSRP

- Strategic acquisition of environmentally sensitive properties
- Optimal projection of the Town's natural resources
- Protection and enhancement of town's character
- Development of village centers
- *(Golf courses considered open space)*

Key Acquisitions and Projects

- Downey *(Adjacent to Saquatucket Harbor)*
- Verrochi *(On Herring River)*
- Muddy Creek Bridge
- Former Hall Property *(Last acquisition in northwest area of town)*

Goals Moving Forward

Goal 1: Maintain an inventory of Existing Town-Owned Property and identify Appropriate uses

- **Update inventory maintain GIS system**
- Identify existing and potential uses for parcels

Goal 2: Implement Land Management Plans for Existing Conservation Parcels

- Existing and proposed *(Robbins Pond and Isabel Smith Monomoy River Woodland)*

Goal 3: Identify Future Open Space Acquisitions

- Criteria *(Uses numerous factors)*

Goal: 4 Enhance Trail Systems within Open Space Areas

- *Each Trails Committee Member takes responsibility for certain areas*
- *Thompson's Field Land Management in progress*
- *A rare species of butterfly has been identified at Thompson's Field for the first time*

Goal: 5 Protection of Natural Resources and Community Character Through Growth Management Strategies

Goal: 6 Preserve and Enhance the Following Natural Resources: Groundwater and Surface Water; Coastal Water and Adjacent Shoreline Areas; Inland and Coastal Wetlands; and Wildlife and Plant Habitats.

- *Picking parcels for open space is very much in line with Harwich Conservation Goals*

Goal: 7 Management of the Handling and Disposal of Solid Hazardous Waste Products

- *Working with DPW and Transfer Station*

Goal: 8 Preserve and Enhance Unique Natural and Manmade Features and Resources

- *200 acres of cranberry bogs; salt marshes and vernal ponds have gone fallow in Harwich*

Goal: 9 Preserve and Enhance Opportunities for Passive and Active Recreation to Meet the Needs of Both Residents and Visitors

- *Trails parking available*
- *Well-kept beaches; management plan*
- *Parking virtually sustainable*

Public Survey - June 2015

- 379 responses – most returned on-line (not a “scientific survey”)
- Increase from 1987 survey with 167 responses and 2009 survey with 239 responses
- “Should the Town continue to acquire and preserve open space and natural areas?”
 - 85% “Very important”, 10% “important”, 5% “neutral” or “not important”
 - *Open Space Acquisition supported by Town Meeting*
- “Important” types of land protection
 - Protect groundwater, drinking water and watersheds - 99%
 - Wildlife habitat areas -96%
 - Around ponds/lakes -90%
 - *Great increase from past surveys*

III.D. Growth and Development Patterns

- **Seeking a balance between open space and developed land**
- From the 2000 Harwich Local Comprehensive Plan
 - Adopt a “No Net Change” philosophy
 - Manage growth by shifting development pressure from sensitive to less sensitive areas (encourage Transfer of Development Rights)
 - Recognize that change and growth are natural components of a healthy community
 - Enhance villages by allowing more residents to live near and help support local business
 - Provide adequate public facilities and amenities in growth centers

Growth Patterns Continued

- From the 2016 Open Space and Recreation Plan:
 - Channel future growth to mixed-use growth centers where wastewater and other infrastructure may be provided economically
 - Encourage stronger cluster provisions in areas such as Six Ponds
 - Balance growth with open space protection measures:
 - Continue acquisition of open space parcel
 - Place restrictions on municipal land that is appropriate for conservation
 - Research and establish title on “owners unknown” parcels

QUESTIONS

Linda Cebula asked regarding identification of "owners of unknown property".
Aly Sabatino said she would try to find out.

Jim Atkinson discussed Eminent Domain; title; availability of money (formerly \$50,000 for title work).

Kathy Greer said working on the \$50,000. It is not lost, but in CPC. She said that the process for getting use from CPC is difficult.

Linda Cebula asked who in Town Administration is responsible - need a name.

Peter de Bakker asked about "Tax out" (foreclosed property) he said it can be done quickly. He asked if Town has right of first refusal. Amy Usowski said she has seen it done, but not very often. She said that Town can take advantage of tax abandoned property (bogs most prevalent).

Ms. Usowski and Ms. Sabatino thanked everyone attending and for the questions.

ADJOURN - Meeting adjourned at 6:35 PM

Minutes respectfully taken and transcribed by Marie Hickey, Board Secretary

** Italics indicate statements made during the presentation.*

SIGN IN SHEET Donn B. Griffin Room February 23, 2017

Mary A. Maslowski, Planning Board
Kathy Greer, REOS
Carolyn O'Leary, Conservation
Mary Rossetti
John Rossetti
Linda Cebula
Robert MacCready
Jim Atkinson
Peter de Bakker

*WWH
3-15-17*