

Open Space Preservation Committee
Parks Advisory Committee
Tuesday August 21, 2018 7:00 PM
Mansfield Town Hall Conference Room B

Minutes - FINAL

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:01

2. Roll Call

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

Not present but on posted committee rosters: Roberta Coughlin, Julianna Barrett, William Thorne, Eric Apgar

Town Staff Present: Jennifer Kaufman

3. Review of Minutes

The Minutes of June 19, 2018 regular meeting were approved (moved T.Harrington, second Soares)

4. Opportunity for Public comment

No members of the public were present.

5. New Business

• *CT DEEP Recreational Trails Program Grant – Due 10/31*

Numerous potential trail improvements that might be eligible for this grant program were discussed, including some upgrades, wetland crossings and connections. No specific project stood out as an obvious choice.

Town staff also discussed the potential to leverage some National Park Service Technical Assistance Grant money through the Last Green Valley to work with multiple stakeholders such as Joshua's Trust, Connecticut Forest and Park Association, DEEP, UConn, and the Willimantic River Alliance, to develop big picture recommendations and raise awareness of Mansfield as a trail friendly town. Discussion of potential directions this effort could take ensued.

Town staff indicated that a summer Intern had geolocated all trails with way points and pictures, as a base for potential outreach for greater trail awareness.

• *Simpson Family Property Next Steps*

The potential timeline for next steps in developing the Simpson property recreational potential was discussed:

- *Trail Layout/Marking* – volunteers are needed from the committee to get out and mark trails as envisioned during earlier field trips, before the leaves fall. The entry point possibilities were discussed, and it was concluded that the trail start should be across from the Mount Hope Park parking lot.
- *Signage* – Town staff reported any signage is on hold pending potential updating of the town logo and graphic design standards.
- *Dedication* – It was considered that this would be planned for the spring to allow signage and trail development to be completed.
- *Management Plan* - The group discussed whether it would be a good idea to approach Eastern Connecticut Conservation District (ECCD) to develop a management plan following the template they prepared and used for some earlier work.

- *Save The Date Joint Committee Meeting Regarding Sustainable CT*

Town staff described the Sustainable CT initiative. The program is operated out of ECSU and Lynn Stoddard is involved. Further information can be found on the internet. Mansfield is registered and moving towards certification, which can occur at several levels. This type of coordination among diverse committees with overlapping interests is appropriate and is considered an important activity for certification points. NOTE: The date is scheduled for October 29th not the 30th as in the agenda.

6. Continuing business

- *Hanks Hill Road Open Space*

This parcel has been acquired by Michael Taylor and his gifting of it to the town will come before Town Council on September 24th. It was noted that some brush and small trees have been removed, altering the appearance somewhat. Town staff will inquire if further work is planned before transfer to the town. There was discussion of a companion donation of money to the open space fund to offset maintenance costs to the town.

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

The Committee on Committees accepted the merger, with a slight change in the charge language; finalization of the proposed merger of these committees will come before Town Council September 24th. The staggered terms proposed were accepted as a good idea, and all committee members are being reappointed to random terms to start this cycle. There was some discussion of what would constitute a quorum and if a working field trip to observe conditions, with no decisions being made, would constitute an official meeting, especially if fewer than a quorum attended.

- *Connecticut Bird Atlas*

Sue Harrington reported that observations were continuing, and the data is easily retrieved from the data platform. This is the first phase in a three-year project, and this phase focuses on documenting presence of breeding pairs of common species. Subsequent phases will focus on rarer species and winter/migratory populations. One unusual observation is of a raven nest inside a building on Spring Hill Farm.

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 8:15 PM (moved Wetherell; seconded T.Harrington)

Exited executive session at 9:03

8. Communications

Communications were noted as listed on the agenda.

9. Other

No specific topics raised.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 (move Morrow; second Kessel)

Respectively Submitted
Ken Feathers, Secretary