

Open Space Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday March 8, 2023, 5:00 p.m.

Old Lyme Town Hall

Members Present: Chair Gregory Futoma, Vice Chair Michael Aurelia, Secretary Anne Redfield, Fred Behringer, Amanda Blair, Claudio Denoya and Andrea Fenton

Members Absent: Evan Griswold

1. Call to Order by Greg Futoma at 5:04
2. Approval of Minutes for February 8, 2023
Anne Redfield motioned to approve the minutes and Fred Behringer seconded. There was no discussion and the motion passed with 5 ayes. Amanda Blair and Michael Aurelia abstained.
3. 36-1 Buttonball Road Property Committee – Fred Behringer
 - a. Open Space Recommendation to Buttonball Road committee
Amanda Blair recused herself from the discussion.
Fred Behringer affirmed Open Space Commission's position that the property should be jointly managed by the Harbor Management Commission (HMC) and Open Space. He reported that at the last Buttonball Committee (BC) meeting, John Mesham and Jared Bombaci, representing the Inland Wetlands Commission, volunteered to draft a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen.
A draft statement detailing Open Space's position and plans for future property use was reviewed. Fred Behringer suggested an amendment to the draft reflecting member views on trails and preservation of the existing native understory. Claudio Denoya noted that many property visitors may be birders or uninterested in water access.
Andrea Fenton made a motion to amend the Open Space statement per the discussion. Anne Redfield seconded. The motion was passed with 6 ayes; Amanda Blair abstained.
Greg Futoma asked if there was any public comment. Amanda Blair, as a private citizen, thanked Fred Behringer and Mike Aurelia for their work on the committee and asked that Open Space consider certain additional recommendations for the property's use. She showed recent photos of furniture dumped on the property.
Fred Behringer said he would provide the Open Space statement to the committee's Inland Wetland Commission representatives.
4. Ferry Landing Wildlife Refuge Habitat Restoration Project – Anne Redfield
 - a. Presentation to Board of Selectman (BOS) Recap
Anne Redfield said the BOS approved a motion recommending that the Board of Finance approve up to \$40,000 for a multi-year Phragmites management project. She will provide the Board with herbicide information.
 - b. Wildlife Camera
Coyotes, bobcats and fisher cats have been filmed; a LOLHS student with video editing skills will assist with creating a short clip for the town website
Anne Redfield motioned to authorize spending over \$2,000 for phragmites management. Andrea Fenton seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.
Anne motioned to authorize spending over \$2,000, if needed, for native plantings for the site. Andrea seconded. Discussion: Fred Behringer questioned the cost. Anne stressed that the number was a high estimate, and the actual cost should be considerably less. The motion was unanimously approved.
5. Open Space Updates - Greg Futoma, Anne Redfield
 - a. Freedom of Information Act training session (2/23/23)
Anne Redfield recapped key points from a recent town workshop. She will distribute info to members.
 - b. Property Discussion – Noyes, Champlain North
Greg Futoma opened a discussion regarding a request from John Noyes that his family's bargain sale of land to the town for open space be recognized. The creation of a separate Noyes open space was debated. The commission will research how that may be accomplished and also consider a policy regarding naming of purchased open space land.
 - c. OSC Website
Greg Futoma reported the Town launched a revised website. With changes to various URLs, QR codes on signs and maps may need to be revised.

Greg Futoma said the Board of Finance will review the commission's budget request in March. A discussion centered on digital and hard copy document storage. He asked members wishing to advocate for future projects to contact him.

6. Property Stewardship – Michael Aurelia.
In his position as Vice Chair, Michael Aurelia will oversee various property stewardship responsibilities.
7. Community Outreach - Andrea Fenton
 - a. Signs update
Andrea Fenton shared material samples for signs to be posted on Champlain North Open Space.
 - b. Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) Conference
Andrea Fenton said after a hiatus due to COVID, an in-person conference is scheduled on March 25. She encouraged members to attend and perhaps coordinate their workshop selections so that multiple sessions relevant to open space issues might be attended.

A LOLHS environmental club planting day on Ferry Landing may be scheduled late April early May.
8. New Business - None
9. Public comment - None
10. Adjourn
Fred Behringer motioned to adjourn, and Anne Redfield seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Suzanne McAuliffe