

Future Open Space Planning Committee (FOSP)

March 24, 2011 Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Richard Bauman, Wayne Brooking, Craig Cooper, Chris Franklin, Frank Governali, John Greene, Caitlin Jordan, Carol Anne Jordan, Bo Norris, Jessica Sullivan

Staff: Maureen O'Meara

The first meeting of the Future Open Space Committee was called to order in the Jordan Conference Room of Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. All ten Committee members were present as was FOSP's staff support, Town Planner Maureen O'Meara. In addition, Dave Sherman, Town Council Chair and Mike McGovern, Town Manager attended for a portion of the meeting.

Introductions and Welcome: The meeting opened with each member introducing themselves and identifying the interest they represented. Following the introductions, Mr. Sherman welcomed and thanked the members for volunteering. He then proceeded to discuss various aspects of the Town Council's charge to FOSP, the Town's Communication Policy and the State's Right to Know Law. All three documents were supplied to Committee members in advance of the meeting.

Mr. Sherman asked that Committee members acquaint themselves with the contents of these documents, stressing their importance as explanations of what FOSP is expected to accomplish and how it is to conduct its business. Concerning the Council charge, Mr. Sherman encouraged the Committee to ask for any needed clarifications and inform the Council of other situations that required its attention. He also said that the Council would be expecting an update after the first six months of FOSP's work.

Mr. Sherman proceeded on to the Town's Communications Policy, which was written to insure that all Town business, including the work of FOSP, be as open and accessible to the public as possible. He specifically mentioned the posting of up-to-date information on the Town website and providing opportunities for public comment at every meeting as ways of advancing Communication Policy goals.

Mr. Sherman's final topic was the Right to Know Law. He reviewed the intent of the Law generally and spent additional time discussing how the Law is thought to effect FOSP email communications. Essentially, the public is entitled to see all such communications and copies must be retained for that purpose. Further, as with face to face meetings, substantive email communications involving more than two people are not to occur without public notice.

After thanking Committee members again, Mr. Sherman and Mr. McGovern left the meeting.

Election of Chair: At this time the Committee proceeded to the next agenda item, election of a chair. Various Committee members identified qualities they thought a chair should possess including; experience in a similar setting, leadership skills needed to keep FOSP effectively moving forward and the ability to conduct public forums. John Greene was asked if he would

consider becoming chair and said he would but, with some reservations. John expressed concern about the amount of work involved and the public speaking aspects of the job. When no other Committee member expressed interest in the job, John was unanimously elected chair. After discussion and approval of a vice-chair position, Wayne Brooking was elected to that office, again unanimously. Committee members also approved the idea of rotating the duties of secretary among the members, in alphabetical order. Accordingly, Dick Bauman became the designated secretary for the first meeting.

Conduct of Meetings: The Committee discussed and agreed to a monthly meeting schedule with the understanding that more meetings might be added once the scope of work was better determined. A schedule of dates and times when all or almost all Committee members would be able to attend the meetings was established, after considerable effort. The meeting schedule, which extends to the end of 2011, will be distributed by Maureen. Members were asked to notify Maureen whenever they are unable to attend a meeting.

The Committee continued with a discussion of the Town's Communication Policy as it applies to FOSP. It was decided that a public comment period would be provided at the beginning and end of every meeting. All comment periods will be conducted as prescribed by the document attached to the meeting agenda. Maureen will assist the Committee as necessary in observing all other applicable provisions of the Communications Policy. She will also serve as the initial point of contact for emails direct to FOSP.

The Committee proceeded to discuss the decision making procedure and agreed to establish a quorum as being six or more members in attendance at a meeting. Final approval of a decision requires a quorum to be in attendance and a majority of the quorum voting in the affirmative. Tie votes are considered disapprovals.

The last meeting topic concerned the form in which packages of meeting documents would be distributed, either by mail or as email attachments. After discussion, Committee members agreed to have these materials transmitted as attachments to email, on a trial basis.

Next Steps/Agenda: For presentation at the next meeting, the Committee asked Maureen and Chris Franklin to identify and describe the properties that currently comprise the Town and Land Trust's open space inventories. In addition Chris will talk about the Land Trust's outreach program.

The Committee anticipates devoting a significant portion of the following meeting to development of a Request for Proposal (RFP) that is required to hire a consultant who will, according to the Council's charge to FOSP, "conduct an analysis of the costs and benefits to the town budget of development versus retention of open space." To prepare for that effort, Maureen will seek out similar RFP's issued by other municipalities.

Public Comment: Frank Strout, who was present throughout the meeting, spoke briefly during the comment period. Mr. Strout informed the Committee that he had been on the committee that was responsible for writing the Town's current Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Strout

went on to say that the Plan's Recreation and Open Space chapter was the most difficult and time consuming to produce and he was very gratified that FOSP would be revisiting the entire subject.

Adjourn: There being no other business before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m. The next meeting will be at 8:30 a.m. on April 8th in the Jordan Conference Room.