

**FOSP Survey Subcommittee**  
**January 30, 2012**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**ACP Conference Room, Town Hall**

Attending: Jessica Sullivan, Chair, Chris Franklin, Frank Governali

Staff: Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner

The committee meeting began at 11:30 a.m. No members of the public attended and no public comment was received.

Ms. Sullivan referred to the Committee charge regarding what should be included for questions in the survey.

Mr. Governali said the survey questions should mirror the committee charge. He was not sure we should ask for a list of highest open space priorities. We should only ask for things we can act upon. If the committee will not be identifying specific parcels, then we should not ask that question in the survey.

Mr. Franklin supports quantifying public support for funding open space.

Ms. O'Meara explained that the beginning of the survey would include generic questions about the responder and that we should rely on our consultant to prepare those, as was done for the Comp Plan survey. The subcommittee agreed.

The subcommittee agreed that the 2005 Comp Plan survey question on potential goals (p. 17 of survey report) should be asked again.

Mr. Franklin supports using the open space priority criteria as a basis for a survey question. It is important to know if residents support purchase of open space for wildlife habitat, water access, public access, etc.

The subcommittee agreed that questions on funding should be asked.

Ms. Sullivan returned to the question of key parcels and the committee charge to query residents about specific parcels. Mr. Governali agreed that we would need to ask the Town Council to amend the charge to remove that from the survey.

The subcommittee agreed that the survey should be timed so that the FOSP committee could decide to forward a formal request to the Town Council to

eliminate the requirement that a key parcels list be developed, and that request could be heard by the Town Council before the survey is done. The survey questions will be drafted to assume that a key parcels list will not be created. If the Town Council still supports a list, the survey could be revised before it is administered.

Mr. Governali wants the survey to include a question or questions on examples of how to pay for open space. The questions should be framed to provide useful feedback rather than just general support. He likes an approach such as asking if you would be willing to support a dollar, 5 dollars, etc.

Ms. Sullivan questioned if the committee's Range of Tools draft should be included in the survey?

Mr. Franklin responded that the clustering question is that open space is obtained at no cost, but does that open space relate to open space priorities? Do we want to be proactive on the type of open space preserved? Mr. Franklin said that clustering as a tool would be retained.

Ms. Sullivan was not sure we want to include clustering questions in the survey. Perhaps we should ask about the zoning as it relates to the Range of Tools.

Mr. Franklin would like to explore what new tools the public has an appetite for. What else besides clustering? He also wants to expand on funding tools.

Ms. Sullivan is concerned that these questions could be complicated in a survey. She would prefer the survey is simple and straight forward. For example, funding is a tax increase or a land bond, both of which are paid by taxpayers but perceived differently.

Mr. Governali likes surveying the depth of public support for funding, \$1, \$5, etc. In response to a suggestion that the amount of funding appropriate in partnerships be queried, he does not see value in that question.

Mr. Franklin asked if a question regarding a preference for town ownership be asked.

Mr. Governali again focused on how valuable answers would be. For example, Do you favor purchasing open space without full public access? We should be careful about asking questions for which we already know the answer.

Mr. Franklin would like to hone in on the types of open space that are preferred.

Ms. Sullivan said we should emphasize more cost sharing, rather than a specific Land Trust partnership.

The subcommittee agreed that a question testing the support for a land bond should be included. The question should include different levels of support and the annual cost to the median value home. The partner to this question would test support for the current town practice of the town funding open space purchases on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Franklin raised the question of impact fees.

The subcommittee agreed that “impact fees” are legally constrained and the question was more if the town, using some mechanism, wanted to establish a fee to fund open space acquisition. One example, provided for discussion purposes, was to add a dollar to the building permit fee and dedicate that revenue to the land acquisition fund. Other techniques could also be used. Subcommittee members talked about targeting just new development for this fee or if everyone should pay, with no conclusion.

Mr. Governali said that the theory of surveys is if the respondent says they support something, but then they do not support the following options to implement, you then see if they really want to pay for it.

Mr. Franklin asked if we want to ask some of the financing questions that return money to folks to preserve open space?

The subcommittee agreed that this was part of the charge that the FOSP committee has not done yet and did not want to include it in the survey.

Mr. Governali summarized the content of the survey as follows:

- Re-establish open space as a priority
- What open space characteristics are a priority
- What is the depth of commitment to pay for open space

Ms. Sullivan and Mr. Franklin agreed this was a good summary.

The subcommittee agreed to meet next with consultant MaryEllen FitzGerald. Mr. Franklin will check on bonding research conducted by other towns in advance of bond votes and Ms. O’Meara was directed to develop a table on the annual cost to median value households of a \$5 million dollar bond.

The next meeting of the subcommittee will be dependent on the availability of the consultant, with tentative dates of 2/3/2012 at 8:00 a.m. or 2/7/2012 at 10:00 a.m.

The subcommittee adjourned at 12:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen O'Meara  
Town Planner