

Draft Meeting Minutes
Future Open Space Preservation Committee
November 2, 2011

Attendees:

John Greene (Chair), Wayne Brooking, Carol-Ann Jordan, Caitlin Jordan, Frank Governali, Jessica Sullivan, Craig Cooper, Bo Norris, Maureen O'Meara (Staff).

Members not in attendance: Richard Bauman, Chris Franklin

Call to Order: Chair Greene called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Public comment: The chair opened the floor for public comment. No one from the public spoke.

Approval of meeting minutes from October 19, 2011: The minutes from October 19, 2011 were reviewed and discussed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Bo Norris and seconded by Carol Ann Jordan. The motion was carried by a unanimous vote.

Correspondence: The committee had received a letter from resident Jay Cox. Frank Governali noted that the letter contained some good points and that the committee should be mindful of them. Chair Greene agreed and was sure that the points outlined in the letter would come up during later discussion.

Meeting schedule for 2012: The committee discussed possible meeting dates for the upcoming year. The dates settled on are as follows:

Jan 25 7PM
Feb 29 7PM
Mar 28 7PM
April 25 7PM
May 23 7PM
June 27 7PM
August 15 7PM
Sept 26 7PM
Oct 24 7PM
Nov 28 7PM
Dec 12 7PM

It was also agreed to revisit the summer and fall dates during the April 25th meeting.

Tax Programs presentation from Town Assessor: The Town Assessor, Matt Sturgis, gave an overview of existing State tax programs available to promote open space preservation. Matt distributed some Maine Property Tax Bulletins. He then read a portion of the Maine Constitution as it deals with property taxes. Matt outlined the three programs currently in Use in Cape Elizabeth; Tree Growth, Farm Land, and Open Space. Matt reviewed each program classification giving pros and cons to each, as well as penalties for withdrawing from each respective classification. Matt reminded the committee that all of the tax adjustments in Cape Elizabeth were valuation based at this time. Currently in Cape Elizabeth there are 1188.66 acres classified under Tree Growth, 119.22 acres classified under Farm Land, and 19.78 acres classified under Open Space.

Range of Tools: The chair suggested that due to the limit on time, the committee discuss “tool #14” in our range of tools. A discussion of possible local tax rebate took place. Maureen stated that an outright rebate program was not possible due to current laws; there are ways of establishing funds that would in effect provide tax rebates to qualifying landowners. It was decided that a “tax rebate” type of program be included in the range of tools, but be added as a separate item in the “toolbox” (#15) The committee agreed that the tool #14 recommendation is acceptable as written, after the removal of the section referring to local tax rebate. Bo Norris added that the withdrawal penalties should be added in the limitations section. A motion was made by Craig Cooper, to accept draft tool #14 as amended, seconded by Wayne Brooking. Motion carried unanimously. Tool #15: The Chair recommended that this tool only be applied to Farm Land, a discussion ensued about what a possible rebate percentage would be, and if the committee actually wanted to set some sort of percentage at this time. The committee asked Maureen to provide a spreadsheet showing many different percentages for the committee to view and discuss.

Key Parcels: Due to time constraints the committee voted to eliminate the Key Parcels item from the current agenda to be included on a future agenda

Next Steps/draft agenda for next meeting: November 16th, 7:00 p.m.

- Cost Benefit Analysis The committee suggested that the cost Ben Benefit Analysis presentation be limited to approximately 1 hour
- Range of Tools

It was suggested that the meetings be scheduled until 9:30PM for the next two meetings to accommodate additional work scheduled

Public Comment Period: No public comments were presented.

A motion to adjourn was made by Carol Ann Jordan, seconded by Craig Cooper.
Motioned carried and the meet was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Wayne Brooking