

Rockland Open Space Committee Meeting 6/12/2023, Town Offices, Lower Conference Room, 6:30 p.m.

Attending: Donald Cann, Chair; Mike Bromberg, Vice-Chair, George Anderson, Joanne Donnelly, Pam Titus, Kathy Kirby

Scott MacFaden – Wildlands Trust; Lorraine Pratt- Conservation Commission

Mr. Bromberg moved, seconded by Ms. Titus, to approve the minutes of the meeting 3/27/2023, unanimously voted.

The Committee reorganized with Mr. Bromberg nominating, Ms. Titus seconding Mr. Cann for Chair. Ms. Kirby nominated, Ms. Titus seconded Mr. Bromberg for Vice-Chair. Mr. Bromberg nominated, Ms. Donnelly seconded Ms. Kirby for Secretary. Approval for all nominees was voted unanimously

Mr. Bromberg and Mr. Cann reported on the status of the former SWNAS development plans indicating that N.E. Development has presented varying maps depicting open spaces, developable land and the potential for breach of the current property border. Mr. MacFaden noted that the plans indicate the developer wants to reopen the entire permitting process. Mr. Bromberg and Mr. Cann met with Natural Heritage to confirm its protected areas of the base. It has not yet been approached by the developer for discussion of its protected areas. Counsel for the developer is said to have found differences in recordings that may affect the validity of CM permits. The developer is scheduled to make its presentation of plans to the Rockland Select Board on 7/11/2023. It was suggested to town officials that there be a review of what is currently know of the developer's plans to facilitate questioning at the presentation, but they demurred, wanting to see what is presented on 7/11/2023. Mr. Bromberg advised that a presentation has been made to Weymouth and its planning and zoning departments have been carefully reviewing submissions. Ms. Kirby asked if Weymouth would be willing to share its research. Mr. Bromberg will inquire. The committee agreed that it, in conjunction with other interested town entities, should prepare an educational presentation to ensure that the public knows the history of development proposals for the former SWNAS, particularly their effects on open space, numbers of residential units, and ancillary site development, such as sewage treatment and the need for municipal facilities. Mr. Cann will contact the Metropolitan Area Planning Council regarding their involvement.

Ms. Pratt presented the Rockland Conservation Commission Regulations for Use of Conservation Lands. These apply to conservation properties other than McCarthy Farm and the George Anderson Town Forest, which have their own rules. The committee thanked Ms. Pratt for her hard work.

The matters of stewardship and volunteerism were discussed. Mr. Cann presented a Public Liability Release form for use when volunteers work at town properties. Ms. Pratt said that MACC has forms for volunteers also. She agreed that the Conservation Commission is the entity to oversee volunteer work on town conservation properties. Mr. Cann will attend the next ConCom meeting to discuss this process. Mr. MacFaden will provide a list of work than is and isn't permitted at McCarthy Farm. It was suggested that goats might be used to control invasive species. Ms. Donnelly noted that mowing was done at the Farm during bird nesting season. Mr. Bromberg will contact the Park Department regarding this matter.