

Open Space & Recreation Forum
March 25, 2009, 7:00 PM

Attendees:

Dave Outman

Vera Cohen

Kimberly Harriman

Don MacIver

Ann Himmelberger

Alex McCurdy

Rick Findlay

Cindy Heitmeyer

Kimberly introduced Committee, reason for the Plan update, history, application for the grant for the Yapp land

Dave demonstrated on maps

Town boundary

Infrastructure

Open Space

Explained chapter land

Alex – stretch along 2A – status of land is “perilous at best”

Work committee is doing is excellent

Need to do is integrate planning efforts – BOS, CC, LCT, Ag. Commission

To move forward – economic development – economic development without open space is not economic development

Management

Can't look at adding business without looking at green space

Communication

Tenacity

Prime example – spread of the Common – all the way up 2A – in terrible jeopardy

Gateway land to Littleton – Couper Farm, Pickard, Fletcher – not all owners see value in agriculture

300+ acres in Westford is commercial

BOS is looking and trying to see what community wants instead of hodgepodge from Cisco to Farms Development

Alex is trying to focus on protecting gateway – preservation of Open Space, Agriculture

If Acton and Littleton get together, where are we?

Yapp Land is also very important

Master Plan steers in this direction, but we need reminders

All parties need to integrate

Recreation, business – all needs to work together

We have lots of little plans, lots of goals, but no big plan

Proactive vision and planning – longer to get someplace but we're in better shape when we get there

No better example than Acton Toyota – plan is being driven by developers – driven by economics

We're in a great position – leveraged state money, planners, hearing message loud and clear, ED net positive rather than if you build a sewer they'll come – key to failure and it failed

Rick – talking to Savas – points from state for town – we got none for water protection – sewage management – if we'd gone through the process of the plan to see what would have happened to get sewer (300,000) would have gotten that point

Alex – preserving vernal pools

For years everyone was in different places

Recreation too – we need a plan because when something is broken, it doesn't get fixed

Dave – open space not in a bubble – conservation & recreation can help attract business too, could be a selling point

Alex – Plan makes town eligible for grants, very important – but anything we can do

Kimberly – implementation of Plan, not just writing

Alex – need to empower the committee to do things – put the committee together but don't empower them – that's his job – BOS – let everybody have a place in the planning of the committee – no elected board or couple of boards

Kimberly – how do you rank farmland

Alex – rate farmland very highly – only trumped by Yapp land b/c of opportunity – Fletcher #1, 119 (Gary's, Springdale, Spring Brook) #2

Feature of Littleton – and important because it used to be a feature of Acton

Don – Acton has worked very hard at working along Route 2 – corn fields

Alex – if you popped off the rotary at 2A – certain impression in Acton, there needs to be a break in that impression for Littleton – “here's a town that's in touch with its history, its culture, its roots” – it's now or never

Rick – wooded parts that are/will be vulnerable – would like to see bike trail from train station to Long Lake – in between Rte. 2 and Foster St.

Don – Joyce ? wants to preserve her land – needs some money but isn't going for fair market value, SVT trustees has land, off of Boxborough Rd. there are some riding trails, some logging happens there – protecting that area is of great concern

Rick – Fish & Wildlife only wants to add to what they want – will they preserve on both sides of the highway – opportunity there

Don – Sanderson land – high priority (Art & Bill Brown) – other side of Whitcomb Road from Oak Hill

Alex – Sanderson fields – open space/recreation combination

Don – transportation infrastructure – better to have satellite parking area than second village area – where would traffic go?

Alex – tree farm is under threat too (the one near the train station)

If we're successful at integrating our planning, train station – how it impacts open space?

Development – we can ask them to do things for us – planning business and train station

Same for recreation needs – address possibly through development

Track – if we decrease by a playing field, we need another playing field

Don – infrastructure impacts open space – quarry site too – will hit end of life soon, what happens then? Transfer of development rights – allow people to develop one place more intensely and give money to protect other – best is in Groton – money goes into a fund (like cell tower money)

Alex – other methods of recurring revenue solely for protection – another cell tower will come to town

Rick – Henry Harvey walked it – negotiating with homeowners and then go to Fish and Wildlife – beautiful greenbelt going through there – work with SVT too

Dave – land that is in Northwest – unprotected – what about that?

Don – Peter Woll, Jim Pickard – behind Oak Hill

Cindy – part of Littleton Track Organization – hopefully having feasibility study done, have two locations possible – LHS and Russell St. - people want to know if there are other places that could be considered – wants to know is there any place else they could consider – if we do look at current place, displacing fields – people feel there is not enough of baseball and soccer fields, recreation point of view – real need for additional fields (need five acres)

Rick – was at NARA in Acton – was a quarry – could be a recreational area someday

Don – at some point there are some lovely areas

Vera – there was a place that was a horseracing track –

Rick – field on Russell St. on other side of Hartwell

Don – Grey Farm area – backs up to – owned industrially (Sandvell Land)

Alex – beside Precast Building – Distribution Drive

Rick – homeowner that has land that goes back all the way to that property – could maybe negotiate a way to get there

Dave – any part of IBM or Cisco

Alex – worth a discussion – tricky spot – Cisco – several different zoning overlays – planners working on it

Don – Cisco land was fairly restricted b/c of wetlands

Alex – tract of land directly across 2A from quarry - cornfield – problem is still proximity to quarry

Rick – Morgan Land is too wet

Don – if can't get APR, should become conservation land – should be protected, also 30-acre Morrison property – should be protected

Cindy – proposing feasibility study to see what issues are at each site – they want the best site and will see what the feasibility study says – tracks can vary a bit but 3.7 is the minimum

Don – behind IBM?

Rick – where LWD – near Train Depot

Alex – problem is aquifer and parking

Dave – could do permeable surfaces for parking

Don – maybe VeryFine – Sunny Delight

Alex – probably a facility that's precarious at this point

Dave – truck space on south side – next to gas station

Rick – would be a great area for smart development if it goes under – train station –

Alex – a lot of wetlands around there

Dave – bike lanes –

Don – bike path – on 119, Bruce Freeman Trail – 119 to Groton and there's another one that's coming to the other side of Groton – work with Nicki Tsongas to get agriculture protection on 119 – one of first numbered roads – goes to 119 in New Ipswich, NH and 119 in VT – cultural or agricultural or historical designation
Area bicycle maps more formalized

Ann – Freedom's Way is working with Littleton for a weekend in October – developing walking routes with designations of older houses on Foster St., King St. to Common, also will do bike routes with similar landmarks – last year they did Ayer

Don – running area – used to be maps when it was digital; grants for recreation, outdoor protection – lakeside connectivity from Prouty Woods to Town Beach, acquire parcels on Long Lake

Rick – connect Prouty Woods to Long Lake

Cindy – in general, bike paths, more playing fields, things kids can use

Rick – trying to connect high school to middle school with a trail through Charlotte Hartwell property, cemetery

Dave – on usability theme – any way to make some of the open space a little more active – Cold Spring Park – stations – exercise – good for kids

Don/Alex – not many people use them

Alex – more handicapped accessible trails

Kimberly – survey – senior citizens want more that is accessible for them, also benches – places to sit (group here in agreement)

Dave – Forge Pond – has kayaked from Forge Pond down Beaver Brook – any trails along it? Amenity?

Rick – pretty well developed along Forge Pond – open space is Matheson's Farm, one end is bog

Don – thinking of agriculture & promoting – management, financial – help promote – some places like town orchard – have increased development & diversity – what happens when current person who leases town orchard can no longer? Concern...

Last night at lecture with Michael Pollan at Tufts – School of Nutrition – New Entry Farming – Foodsheds – as part of planning process – what areas develop food and grow local food and feed an area (like watershed) – Edge City – on edge of major roads – distribution to other areas – different lens of looking at farms – where is it going to go

Rick – very important – three articles in NYT

Don – business section of NYT

Dave – recreational opportunity too – learn how to plan it, get hands dirty, put smaller garden at their houses

Ann - farm in Anatick like CSA Springdell is starting CSA. Doug Peterson: farming is economically viable

Dave – good last point – let's end – 9:00 PM