

Land Acquisition Committee
Minutes of Meeting
April 14, 2015
Lower Level Conference Room
Town Hall – 10 Mudge Way, Bedford, MA

PRESENT: Don Cullis, Chair; Caroline Fedele; Daniel Puffer; Robert Torti
Tom Mulligan and William Speciale arrived before 8:00 pm

Elizabeth Bagdonas, Conservation Administrator

ABSENT: Lori Eggert

At 7:45 pm a motion was made by Mr. Cullis and seconded by Mr. Torti to open the meeting. The motion passed 4-0-0.

Mr. Cullis made a motion to approve the minutes of March 10, 2015. The motion was seconded by Mr. Puffer, and was passed 4-0-0.

Ms. Fedele reported on her discussion with the Selectmen regarding changes in focus that the committee is considering, to make sure it was covering all aspects of its charge. She and Mr. Cullis had previously met to discuss this issue with Planning Director Glenn Garber, who had no comments at that time. She proposed to confer with the Selectmen at some future time to report on the committee's current focus; she also pointed out to the Selectmen that homes for sale had recently been listed near some of the schools.

The Committee deferred the review of other minutes to the end of the meeting.

Mr. Cullis began a presentation of work he had recently completed on the chart for lands of acquisition interest. He projected the revised document on the wall so that the electronic manipulation of the information could be demonstrated. He explained that he had focused on the parcels chosen at the last meeting for consideration as possible athletic field sites. The original format of the chart had been made more selectable, and he demonstrated the options of hiding certain columns, sorting the selected parcels with respect to the chosen columns, and sorting values via new Yes/No columns. These features make the document easier to follow during meetings. He also discussed the column containing wetland/upland percentages: he used the minimum number to sort by.

The subject of tax title lands came up, as some of the recent takings by the Town had been listed on the chart. Ms. Bagdonas explained the general process, but stated that she did not know when the lists were put together or distributed. She will contact Finance Director Victor Garofalo to ask about the process followed and any recent properties that may have been identified. The committee wanted to know if it could be notified as the parcels came up for tax title consideration.

Ms. Fedele reported on a discussion the Selectmen had conducted on the status of the property at 13 Bonnievale Drive. Ms. Bagdonas described the status of some of the Town review of the proposed project, which had been completed by the Conservation Commission and was currently being conducted by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Mr. Cullis continued the selected parcel review by starting an analysis of the various parcels listed at the last meeting – these included G (Brown/Hartwell), H3 and H4 (Brown/Evans), E (Harvard University/Old Causeway), P (Little/Dudley), Q (Samoylenko/Davis), and 83 Carlisle Road (no letter assigned). He projected GIS maps of some of the parcels on the screen, along with moveable templates representing a typical (large) field size and a 40-car parking area. In order to arrive at a typical field model, he had researched various field sizes and developed an average cross-section. The shapes could be moved around as an overlay to the maps, and rotated to demonstrate how they fit into a particular parcel, avoiding wetlands and the 25-foot protected buffer.

Ms. Fedele asked if the Town leased any of its fields, as proposing a potential lease would make an easier conversation with the landowner.

While the group agreed that two of the Old Causeway Road parcels (E2 and E4) offered good potential access and layout, parcel E4 was of more of interest, as it had an easier range of elevations. Parcel G seemed appropriate for a lease, although the potential access from Hartwell Road was not clear, and the property is being actively used at present.

Parcels H3 and H4 were in fact landlocked, but Ms. Bagdonas explained various footpath routes from Washington Street, Evans Avenue, Winchester Drive neighborhoods, and the connections from Railroad Avenue and the Middle School fields. She will put together a larger GIS map showing these features.

The map for Parcel P showed good space for fields and parking, but the committee agreed that an arrangement for this site was not a possibility at present. Ms. Fedele recommended keeping the discussion open.

The update on trail easement contacts was brief, with Mr. Cullis stating that he would call the owner of the South Road path. Mr. Torti wanted to know what the process might be for gaining access from the Alcott Street/Bandera Drive area to Middlesex Community College. He stated that the College was interested and open to discussion, but would want to see what the Town had in mind. Ms. Bagdonas suggested having someone walk the Zanghi land to see if there was a workable access, and offered to ask the Trails Committee to look into this and provide them with a GIS map.

The committee agreed to meet on May 21st at 7:30 pm.

The minutes of January 10th and February were moved for approval by Mr. Cullis and Mr. Torti. The motions passed 6-0-0.

Minutes prepared by Elizabeth Bagdonas.
Minutes approved at meeting of May 21, 2015.

