

LAND USE COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 24, 2013 at 7:30 pm
Select Board Meeting Room

Members Present: Peter Coffin, Sharon Cutler, Barry Iadarola, Anne Mazar and Lawney Tinio.
Also Present: Bill McHenry and Kevin Rudden.

Kevin Rudden gave an update on the Meadow Brook Woods property. He said the cabin is 99% done. He said there are three Eagle Scouts ready to finish the trails and build the two bridges. He will be back with the scouts and details on their projects. He is working with The Trustees of Reservations and Bay State Trail Riders Association (they are funding the bridge projects). Kevin suggested, and the committee agreed, that the open space properties need to have rules posted to manage how the properties are used and monitor misuse, such as going on the properties at night without permission from the town. Kevin will come back to the committee with suggestions using the Milford town guidelines. He also said that he would have a plan to remove the glass around the cabin and bring the suggestion back to the committee.

Peter made a motion to accept the minutes of the 3/21/13 meeting, Sharon seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

The 70-acre Paddock/ D'Alessandro property (52 Providence St.) was discussed. The committee agreed that the location of the property by the Mendon Highway Barn, Senior Center and the Mendon open space property was ideal. Anne suggested the committee walk the property.

Lawney made a motion to walk the Paddock/D'Alessandro property, 52 Providence Street, and consider it for possible town purchase, Peter seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Lawney said the Select Board is considering the purchase of the 21-acre Miscoe Springs Property, (89 Northbridge Road) for a future water source for the town. Barry said that the advantage is that it is already permitted as a water source. Lawney said the Select Board is considering eminent domain. Anne said that CPA open space funds could be used, but the Community Preservation Committee encourages all requests to come with some kind of matching funding and that there were probably some state funding for securing a municipal water source.

Peter made a motion to have the committee consider the town purchasing the Miscoe Springs property, 89 North St, as a future water source, contingent on other grant funding, Sharon seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Furnace/boiler maintenance was discussed to maintain energy efficiency for the units. Commercial Industrial Boiler Service (CIB) submitted a proposal to service all the units in town for \$1850. Barry said that was a reasonable price and we know they do quality work. He said the major concern is to get the job done this fall before the heating season. Anne said it is below the \$5,000 threshold so three estimates are not required. The Finance Committee wants each department to pay for their own furnace/boiler maintenance. **Sharon made a motion to recommend to the Select Board to hire CIB to do the furnace/boiler maintenance, Lawney seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.** Anne will pass this on to the Select Board.

Lawney made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 pm, Barry seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

LAND USE COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 21, 2013 at 6:30 pm
Town Hall Mail Room

Members Present: Sharon Cutler, Anne Mazar and Lawney Tinio.

Also Present: Ellen Gould, Peter Hawkes, Mark Reil and Larry Pearson.

The lease at the Inman Hill Field and the town-owned Route 16 field was discussed for leasing out to a farmer for haying. Anne said that Peter Hawkes has been haying both fields for over a decade and has added soil amendments to both fields. The Inman Hill fields were advertised to farmers, because the committee wanted to promote farming in Mendon, since it is one of the nine goals in Mendon's Open Space and Recreation Plan. The committee also wanted to keep the field open for a more diverse wildlife habitat. Haying the field would save the town the trouble and money from mowing the 30+ acre fields once a year. Peter Hawkes proposal, paying the town \$5 a year was chosen and he has hayed the fields for 10 years.

The five-year lease is up and Anne's concern was that if the property was put out to bid again, it would be easy for another farmer to pay the town a bit more money, since Peter has been investing hundreds of dollars over the past decade improving the soil fertility. Ellen Gould, Agricultural Commission (AgCom) Chair said that she got advice from Cheryl Lekstrom at the MA Farm Bureau. Cheryl said that the common practice in this situation to offer the farmer who has leased the land the right of first refusal, unless the farmer has not cared for the soil or has done something to not maintain the lease agreement. Since, Peter has taken good care of the land, the committee was in agreement that the lease should be offered to Peter. Anne will bring this information to the Select Board.

Anne said she wanted to discuss the town-owned Route 16 field, because there is not lease on this property. Peter Hawkes said that he had hayed the fields for the Finos so that their land could be in Chapter 61A (agriculture) to save on taxes. When the town bought the land in 2004, he just continued haying it. He said he has amended this soil also, but it is not of as good quality, because it is used for events and parking for events. He would like to continue using the field and add lime to the fields this year. Larry said the field needs to be maintained and having Peter hay the field maintains it. Lawney said that leasing the fields to another farmer would not be a big money maker for the town and thought we should support Peter. The committee agreed that the town should offer this land to Peter also. Anne said she would draw up a lease for both properties and pass it by the committee.

Sharon made a motion to draw up leases to hay the Inman fields and the town-owned Route 16 fields and offer the leases to Peter Hawkes with the right of first refusal; it was seconded by Lawney and unanimously approved.

Anne said that the fields on the corner of North Avenue and Hopedale Street that were donated to the town by John Gannett with a deed restriction limiting the land for a new library or open space are not going to be used for a library, since the town voted to buy St. Michaels for that purpose. She asked John Gannett what he thought using the land for agriculture and he liked the idea. Ellen said the AgCom consider the idea of using it as farm plots for Mendon residents, but the commission thought that in Mendon people have enough yard space for their own gardens. Anne said that Jim VanderSluis, said he would like to hay the two fields closest to his fields and thought the third field could be used for a community supported agriculture (CSA) farm or for a farmer to just sell the vegetables with a farm stand. Everyone thought haying the two fields and offering the corner field for a CSA was a good idea for farmers and for Mendon residents. Anne said she write a RFP and consult with the AgCom and the Select Board.

Ellen said all the fields need major work to improve the soil fertility and that the soil should be tested to make sure the farmer is taking good care of the soil.

Lawney said there was no water on the corner and that could be a problem. Ellen said that maybe a well could be dug. Lawney said that also a water tank could be brought to the site. Larry said that the CSA might need a structure, like a barn, on the property to hand out the produce to the members. Mark said maybe a three-sided structure could be built. Anne said she would look in to the deed restriction and see what could be done on the corner field.

Lawney made a motion to use spend \$100 from the Land Use Committee budget for the AgCom to test the soil on the Inman Hill fields, The Route 16 fields and the North Avenue fields, Sharon seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Anne asked Lawney if he could contact the owner of Cobbler's Knoll and deed the 3.61-acre open space lot on 15 Puffer Drive to the town, which should have been done already. It abuts the 26-acre town-owned Paddock property. The Metacomet Land Trust and the Community Preservation Committee is working to develop a conservation restriction (CR) on this property and the 3.61 acres should be included in the CR, so that the owners in abutting the open space don't encroach their lawns in to the open space. Lawney said he would follow through on this.

Lawney made a motion to accept the minutes of 9/27/12, 10/10/12 & 11/8/12; Sharon seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Lawney made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm; Sharon seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Submitted by Anne Mazar