

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes – January 9, 2024

Select Board Hearing Room, Newbury Town Offices, 12 Kent Way, Byfield

FINAL – Approved 2-6-24

OSC Members present: Martha Taylor (Planning Director), Kristen Grubbs (Assistant Planner), Mike Carbone

Other members of the public present: Jim Dooling, Christina Hoffman, Bill Hoffman, David Powell

At 5pm, the meeting was opened and called to order by Assistant Planner Kristen Grubbs.

Attendees introduced themselves. Grubbs, Taylor, and Carbone are the only currently appointed members of the Open Space Committee for FY'24.

There were no citizen queries.

Because the committee has not met in awhile, Grubbs read the list of “Responsibilities of the Open Space Committee” as currently [listed on the Town’s website](#):

Responsibilities of the Committee

Periodic

- Update the Newbury Open Space and Recreation Plan; update required every 5 years. Last Open Space and Recreation Plan completed in 2009; update now required by the State.

Ongoing

- Coordinate and oversee implementation of actions recommended in the Open Space and Recreation Plan.
- Maintain inventory of lands of potential interest for open space purposes and lands important for resource protection and other environmental concerns.
- Collaborate with the Planning Board on open space issues related to OSRD applications and long-range planning.
- Collaborate with the Conservation Commission on issues related to Town-owned open space.
- Collaborate with the Recreation Committee on issues related to active and passive recreation.
- Collaborate with the Historic Commission on issues related to historic and cultural resources.
- Collaborate with the Selectmen on issues related to Town-owned open space and Chapter 61 properties.
- Promote appropriate use of existing public open space.
- Promote or assist in land conservation efforts identified as priorities in the Open Space and Recreation Plan.
- Assist landowners interested in land conservation.

The group discussed this list of activities and other areas of work that open space committees can help with.

The group discussed that the last Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP) was completed for Newbury by the 2009-2010 Open Space Committee members. It was approved by the State in August 2010. Plans are “active” for 7 years so the current plan has expired. One of the results of not having an approved plan is that the Town of Newbury is not currently eligible for certain grants funds offered by the State for open space protection projects. Grubbs mentioned that Newbury is one of about a third of Massachusetts towns (133) do not have currently approved OSRPs.

The group discussed the current membership of the committee (two staff members and 1 Newbury citizen) and the current process for appointing members to the Open Space Committee, which has been done annually at the end of each fiscal year (late June) for the upcoming fiscal year (July 1-June 30 each year). Taylor offered to talk with the Select Board Chair to review the process and would share further information with the group if the attendees had interest in officially joining the committee. The group did not know if there is an upper limit on the number of committee members on the OSC, but it was agreed more than one (1) citizen would be helpful, and that staff members can provide administrative support to a committee without serving as an appointed member.

Attendees agreed that a good homework assignment would be reviewing the current OSRP and the workbook the State provides to help communities with updating their plans.

The group discussed meeting again on February 6th at 5:30pm. Grubbs said she would check the room availability and confirm in advance.

The meeting adjourned at 6:59pm.