

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Wednesday October 18, 2023, MEETING (Skaket Room) 9AM TOWN OF ORLEANS

Attendees: OSC Members: New Chair, Lynn O'Connell, Stephanie Gaskill, Hardie Truesdale, David Herrick and Patti Platten at 9:07AM, also attending Stephen O'Grady from the Orleans Conservation Trust (OCT), Andrea Reed of the Orleans Select Board via Zoom (from 9-930) and Robert Cunningham via zoom.

1. **Call to Order:** Quorum with 4 of 6 members present. The Chair called meeting to order at 0900AM.

2. **Public comment and communications:** There was no public comment at this time.

3. **Approval of Minutes from the 9/20/2023 meeting:** Stephanie Gaskill, moved to approve the September 20, 2023 minutes and Hardie Truesdale seconded. All present voted to approve the minutes.

4. **Stephen O'Grady from OCT regarding 37 Eli Rogers Road, presentation of CPC project application:** Stephen O,Grady gave a detailed description on a GIS map of two lots that the Compact (Cape Cod Conservation Trust) plans to acquire along with the OCT that is a combined total 5.5 acres. These lots enhance the state zone 2 wellhead protection within the town watershed and provides a wildlife corridor between Brewster and Orleans. Both lots straddle the Brewster/Orleans line and are adjacent to certified vernal pools and likely contain a certified vernal pool. The OCT is here today looking for support for this project from the OSC. Only 4.5 acres of the 5.5 acre lot will be protected once the 40,000 square foot lot the home is on is sold to help defray the cost of the whole project. Two cottages are not worth saving and will be demolished. There is quite a bit of development potential on the 4.5 acres with an appraisal in excess of \$700,000. The OCT will request at most 300,000 from the CPC, money for each lot through state grant funding and proceeds from the sale of the house. Private donor fundraising will only commence if needed in the spring of 2024. The town will retain the CR on the property, which will be owned by the OCT. The town will oversee that the property remains open space without having to maintain the property. The Chair noted that this project should clear town meeting as it has fit all the requirements for what a project application should look like. The OCT has reached out to various housing groups in hopes of helping with affordable housing in the area. Select Board member Andrea Reed noted that CPC requests usually come bundled unless there is bonding involved. In conclusion, Stephanie Gaskill ended the discussion by moving that the OSC recommend that the OCT move ahead with its application to the CPC. Hardie Truesdale seconded the motion. All five members present voted in the affirmative. David Herrick offered to draft the letter of support from the OSC to the OCT. On a final note, the Chair asked Stephen O,Grady about the status of the 32 Locust Road property. A brief discussion ensued. Stephen suggesting that the Chair contact the relatives of the owners concerning OSC interest.

5. **Stephen O,Grady, discussion of Chapter 61 properties:** The Chair commenced this discussion by noting that John Jannell had suggested learning about Ch 61 properties. Stephen O'Grady gave the OSC members an overview of MGL Ch 61 and its role in town with property owners. He noted that the town passed up on this opportunity when the OSC was considering the two Peck properties. Land owners who have at least 5 acres in recreation/open space, forestry and agricultural get a tax break as long as they don't take the property out of Ch 61. The town has a right of first refusal if the Ch 61 use is converted, but must act within 120 days. There are only 11 properties in Orleans under Ch 61. Stephen gave an overview on each of these properties.

6. **Update of Bay Ridge Lane properties:** The Chair questioned if she should still go before the Select Board on November 1 to request approval for an appraisal of the Bay Ridge Road lots. The Chair and the committee was surprised that an engineering study for pickle ball courts (DPW property) was turned down at the recent Special Town Meeting. The Chair wanted confirmation from the committee that we still want to proceed with this request in light of the town meeting vote. The Chair believes the OSC project is separate and not dependent on the pickle ball project. The owner wants to sell and Stephanie Gaskill suggested we continue the appraisal to see what the lots are worth.

7. CPC 2024, grant application discussion: Stephanie Gaskill reported that the OSC has \$15,458.53 (\$5,000 of which is earmarked for the Cedar Pond property which We have been unable to secure) in our CPC account and we will add \$12,000 to that amount this year. It was agreed that at our next meeting we should have a discussion about how we might be able to set aside monies, such as in a trust, so that when a property comes on the market which we would like to purchase that we have the funds.

8. Other business-update on role of Vice Chair: At this time the Vice Chair position remains vacant with no members assuming this role. The Chair mentioned that the Select Board would still like to see someone fill this position and to accompany the Chair to various presentations and meetings. This would facilitate matters should the Vice Chair need to fill in for the Chair. The Chair confirmed that David Herrick is an alternate member at this time but would check with the Select Board if he could swap out with member Patti Platten. Stephanie Gaskill stated that she could cover Lynn if the need arose, but that she didn't have any interest in becoming Chair again.

10. Next meeting scheduled: Wednesday, November 15, 2023 at 9AM is the date of the next meeting.

11. Adjourn Meeting: A Motion was made to adjourn by Stephanie Gaskill at 11:11AM. Hardie Truesdall seconded. All five members present approved the motion to adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted, Christopher Keating, Clerk