



TOWN OF PALMER

Palmer Town Building
4417 Main Street
Palmer, Massachusetts 01069

Contact: Angela C Panaccione

Telephone: (413) 283-2611
FAX (413) 283-2637

OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday June 17, 2014 – 2:00 PM

Members Present: Angela Panaccione, Conservation Agent
Donald Blais Jr, Town Council
Alice Davey, Community Development Director
Dave Cotter, Trail Committee
Linda Leduc, Town Planner
Jim Ostrout, Recreation Director

Members Absent: Michael Marciniec, Chair of Planning Board
Bonnie Weeks, Building Inspector/ADA Coordinator
Tharyn Nein-Large, Conservation Commission

Meeting Opens: 2:15 PM – Angela Panaccione

Minute Approval

Motion by Linda Leduc to approve the minutes from May 13, 2014 as written
Motion Seconded by Alice Davey
No further discussion – Vote Taken: 6-0-0

Member Reports

- Linda Leduc – Is working on her sections of Chapter 3
- Alice Davey – Has completed her sections of Chapter 3
- Angela Panaccione – Has completed Chapters 1, 2 & 4.
- Jaimye Bartak – Is currently working on Chapters 5-9 and should have them completed by June 26th.
- Tharyn Nein-Large – Is currently entering all the paper surveys into Survey Monkey for tabulation. He should be completed with survey tabulation by the end of the week.
- Jim Ostrout – Has found playground equipment from the 1900's that was never assembled. He is currently trying to find directions for assembly. He hopes to install the equipment in Burleigh Park
- Dave Cotter – Is trying to work with Mass DOT to adopt the rest stops of Route 67.

Public Survey Discussion

Very low survey responses compared to previous plans. There were a little over 200 respondents, with 2/3 being women. Making the assumption the women complete one survey for an entire family/per household.

The main areas highlighted by the survey, which mirrored the Community Visioning Session, were more access to the rivers and more for families and teens. Also maintain existing parks and conservation lands was a top priority. Many residents felt the town should fix what we have before we try to get more.

Renovating Burleigh Park was also another major area residents felt needed improvement. Jim Ostrout found old playground equipment he is currently looking for assembly directions for and desires to put the equipment in Burleigh Park. Many residents wanted facilities and lights back at Burleigh, as well as increasing safety there and curbing the area for teen drug use.

Surveying on Election Day did not go as planned. Angela Panaccione and Jim Ostrout got tied up with other things. Conservation interns Tharyn Nein-Large and Sara Bourder worked polls from 10am-4pm. No one was there at either location from 4-8pm. Dave was going to do 8am-10am, but polls did not open until 10am.

Discuss Community Visioning Forum

The Community Visioning Session was held on May 20th from 6pm-8pm. Very low turnout, only 15 people attended. Again, River access was a main focal point of discussions; as well as renovating Burleigh Park. There are 4 rivers in town, with very little access on any of them. Most attendees wanted to see a canoe or kayak launch, picnic areas and walking trails.

Trail maintenance, clean up and marking was also discussed a lot; as well as establishing a town website for the Trail Committee.

Jaimye Bartak will be incorporating the major discussion points from the visioning session into the overall goals and objectives (Chapter 8).

Discuss Community Preservation Act (CPA)

The Committee discussed the Community Preservation Act (CPA) and possible ways to propose it to Town Council and the voters. The CPA would create a local Community Preservation Fund for open space protection, historic preservation, affordable housing and outdoor recreation raised locally through the imposition of a surcharge against real property. It was proposed in Palmer in the past, but failed due to the high 3% tax levy and lack of exemptions. Recent 2012 amendments to the legislation allow communities to propose it with a tax rate of as low as 1% and several new exemptions for low income, elderly, commercial and agricultural.

Linda Leduc believes the effort to pass it has to be a grass roots effort and should not come from the town itself. If it was proposed and campaigned through the trails committee, recreation department, historical committee or local farm groups; with support of local town government it would have a better chance of passing. Alice Davey agreed it needs to be a community effort and not a town proposition.

Donald Blais did encourage bringing it up to town council to have it placed on next year's ballot. Linda Leduc felt it needs to be on the ballot at the right time. It should not go on with any Proposition 2 ½ votes and should probably wait until after the police department is paid for as well. If the CPA is proposed with other questions that also aim to raise taxes, than the likelihood of it passing significantly decreases.

Angela Panaccione stated she has a lot of information and handouts she developed for Brimfield outlining the benefits of the CPA and breaking down exactly what a tax would look like and the benefits of adopting the legislation. She determined in Brimfield, it would only raise taxes by \$32/year based on the average assessed value of the homes in town. She could develop the same handout for Palmer as well, with exact figures for cost increases. The handout could then be mailed to town residents as a flyer to begin education.

Linda Leduc also recommended holding informational sessions about the CPA, where representatives from the state Community Preservation Coalition would come and discuss with interested residents. Or possibly attending meetings of the trail committee, rec committee, etc. and presenting it there. A large part of passing the legislation is community education and awareness. The CPA needs to be presented as more of an investment than a tax.

Meeting Schedule

- July 8, 2014 @ 2pm: Review Draft OSRP
- August 12, 2014 @ 2pm: Review Final Draft OSRP & Preparation for Public Hearing
- September 2014: Public Forum on the Plan
- November 2014: Submit Draft Plan to State

Next Meeting Date: July 8, 2014 @ 2pm

- Review Draft Plan – Angela will email draft for review on June 26th
 - Section 1: Plan Summary – Angela Panaccione
 - Section 2: Introduction– Angela Panaccione
 - Section 3: Community Setting – Alice Davey & Linda Leduc
 - Section 4: Environmental Inventory – Angela Panaccione
 - Section 5: Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest – Jaimye Bartak, PVPC
 - Section 6: Community Goals – Jaimye Bartak, PVPC
 - Section 8: Goal & Objectives – PVPC and Committee
 - Section 9: Seven Year Action Plan – Committee will work
- Continue review of draft maps

Meeting Adjourns: 3:05 PM

Motion by Linda Leduc to adjourn at 3:05 pm
Motion Seconded by Alice Davey
No further discussion – Vote Taken: 6-0-0