

CITY OF GARDNER
Open Space and Recreation Plan Steering Committee
Gardner City Hall – Manca Annex
115 Pleasant St., Room 202
Thursday June 1st, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.
In person meeting Gardner Police classroom

ANNOUNCEMENT - Any person may make a video or audio recording of an open session of a meeting, or may transmit the meeting through any medium, subject to reasonable requirements of the Chair as to the number, placement and operation of equipment used so as not to interfere with the conduct of the meeting. Any person intending to make such recording shall notify the Chair forthwith. All Documents referenced or used during the meeting must be submitted in duplicate to the Conservation Agent for the Conservation Commission. All documents shall become part of the official record of the meeting.

Members Present:

Sophie Dorow, Rob Oliva, Norman Beauregard, Trevor Beauregard, Anna Wilkins, Ron Cormier, Steve Rockwood, Arica McCarthy, Gordon Leedy

Members Absent:

David Orwig, Norman Beauregard, Steve Cormier

Guests & Visitors:

Victoria ViHeidorn, Alan Rousseau, Susan Rousseau, Robert J. Swartz, Paul DeMeo, David Antaya, Erin Kiewel

MEETING – brought to Order by Sophie Dorow at 6:10 pm

Discussion

Gordon Leedy begins opening discussion about the goals and reason for the public meeting. Here to review the draft plan and hopefully get the endorsement from the committees and submit to the state for approval.

Arica McCarthy begins screen sharing, goes over objectives of reviewing the 2015 plan and get some input for the 2022 plan draft.

Plan for tonight's meeting is to go over the role of OSRP, Overview of updated OSRP planning process, Review of survey and outreach results, review of progress on actions in the previous plan, review of 2022 action plan questions and comments about the OSRP.

Arica summary on CPA Open space network funding opportunities and eligibility within the Division of conservation services.

Describes how the updated plan includes more labels and is more consistent with the plan itself. Arica briefly goes over the public survey process and results that helped formulate

the plan draft and compared and contrasted the old plan 6 goals to the new plan adding one additional goal to the 7 year action plan.

It is explained how some goals were adjusted/removed to demonstrate that we want to include goals that were thought to be more feasible and most realistic for future improvements/maintenance.

Arica presented the Action plan map for future improvements and maintenance goals within the next 7 years.

Arica opens floor to questions/comments-

Dave Antaya

- asks to clarify/ specify map #11 Level of Protection “Permanent open space” “protected open space” of a parcel on route 140

It is explained by the committee that the city of Gardner has the authority to determine whether they can be developed if there are no permanent protections on the parcel. In the past it has been considered permanently protected property. As long as there is no conservation easement in the DEED. The city identifies the land and determines what can be changed to the degree that there are no external factors. No changes can be made to the plan until actions are taken.

Paul Demeo

- inquires what orange parcels represent in Level of protection map #11.
- And inquires where the floodplain layer is. The committee responds by explaining that the map depicted is not a floodplain overlay map.

Alan Rousseau:

- Continuing on map #11 , they would like to see an explanation of what labels mean on the map, Arica suggests to leave the definitions out of map and include within the details of plan itself.

Victoria Heidorn:

- Inquires about the input of landscaping suggestions for native plants vs non native vegetation when park improvements are carried out.

Gordon suggests to adopt a regulation that specifically prohibits invasive species, this is more of a zoning question and is not a conversation within OSRP meeting.

Paul Demeo:

- Inquires if OSRP is available online for public as well as appendices. Arica states it is all included on the city website. Community preservation act should also be proposed to city council.
- Continue implementation of forest stewardship plan, and would like to know what the status is on it. Rob will provide more detail to this plan in future meeting discussion.

- Urges the city of Gardner to build up and not sprawl outward toward rural areas and preserve open space.
Gordon replies that the smart growth is included in the action plan.

Alan R.

- Referencing map #8 Unique features, approximate esker location with vernal pools and kettlehole bog. Suggest GIS draws a more mapped out esker that depicts a much more in depth area and describes how significant it is to the City of Gardner and add label and discuss on page 4-8.
- Urges to add significance of forest area and hiking trails.
- 4-9/4-10 environmental challenges, landfills and asks what the environmental challenge is and expresses concern to put more detail about perspective of OSRP and detail in the plan.

Anna Wilkins OSRP

- committee suggests a verbiage to explain more in depth about environmental challenge in sewage sludge and urges more context as to why it's a challenge. Tighe and Bond agree to add further verbiage to the section on the landfill environmental challenges.

Alan R.

- References table 5-4, Suggests adding Ebenezer Keyes to the table. It is added on the map however needs to be on the table.
- Wildwood cemetery forest is part of the parcel and includes a forest management plan. Rome conservation land gained acreage. Brings the number of acres to 192 acres
Committee states it is already in plan..

Erin K.

- Outdoor ice-skating rink suggests that with a changing climate, suggests planning for more climate resiliency instead of actions/plans that don't work to climate resiliency.

Committee explains it is not expensive addition to city recreation.

Anna Wilkins

- Urges for a more resilient plan for recreation and hope for working on action plan items and set up for success in a way parks, trails, paths, reflect on hopes and dreams. Use GIS Storymap, platforms for citizens to be able to access and needs to be continuously updated every couple of years. Committee discusses to add this to action plan goals.

Paul Demeo

- Gardner Airport is partially located in another town.

Committee states it is not within the Gardner Boundaries and is not open space.

Victoria H.

- Would like to add community resources and take the lead on social media for people to know where to recreate and use open space trails, waterways etc.

Committee gives detail on plans for trail maps, signs, open space advertising.

Anna Wilkins and Gordon discuss open space advisory committee and suggest expand offices department and committees. Trevor suggests not to expand to a committee that includes citizen help and input volunteer help group.

Erin K.

- DPW goals for hiring employees and how they could help carry out that process if they demonstrated an LGBTQ and overall inclusive work environment to bring in more staff as she sees DPW is struggling with retaining workers for the City. Questions what the city can do for the community to be more inclusive to obtain more workers.

Rob (also DPW) suggests looking into diversity campaigns through city.

Dave Antaya

- Thanks to whole committee for effort to implement open space and recreation for citizens.

Gordon wraps up questions/comments:

Next steps endorsement from the planning board, city council, conservation commission and the mayor. Then submit the plan document to the state for input.

Ron Cormier

Suggests holding another meeting, the committee discusses that all parties were informed of the meeting and provided with plan document and adequate notice. The meeting is being recorded and will be available on YouTube for viewing.

Meeting end.

Upcoming Meetings

Undetermined

NOTICE: These Agenda items consist of items that are reasonably anticipated by the Chair to be discussed at the meeting and are specifically allowed to be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.
