

OWN CLERK, ROCKLAND
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Rockland Open Space Committee Meeting 1/30/2023, Town Offices, Upper Meeting Room 6:30 p.m.

Attending: Donald Cann, Chair, George Anderson, Joanne Donnelly, Pam Titus, Kathy Kirby

Lorraine Pratt, Conservation Commission; Scott MacFaden, Wildlands Trust; Justin Evans, Whitman Select Board

The minutes of the 1/10/2023 meeting were reviewed, Ms. Titus made a motion to approve, seconded by Ms. Donnelly, and unanimously approved by the committee.

Mr. Cann discussed a hike of the rail trail and concert sponsored by Massachusetts Walking Tour to take place on 6/24/2023. An indoor venue for the musical performance may need to be considered. Ms. Kirby suggested 4/15/2023 for Town Cleanup Day. Ms. Davidson and Ms. Flaherty, Reimagine Rockland organizers, agree to the date. Ms. Kirby will contact various departments for approval.

Ms. Titus and Ms. Pratt presented draft Conservation Lands Rules and Regulations. After discussion, the committee agreed on three modifications: 1) a prohibition on feeding animals, 2) a prohibition on the introduction of any plant or animal species, 3) a prohibition on drones and any other remotely controlled vehicles. Mr. MacFaden noted that some lands may be under the care and custody of the Park Department which should have its own regulations for those properties.

Mr. Evans, a member of the Whitman Select Board came to discuss a piece of Whitman open space that is within the Town of Rockland borders, formerly the Camp Alice Carlton Girl Scout Camp. There has been some interest shown by an entity wanting to acquire the property for the development of club soccer fields. Beginning in the early 2010's, Rockland has been taxing the property. It was suggested that the Rockland and Whitman Town Administrators confer about the possible cessation of taxation and return of prior tax monies in exchange for Whitman's deeding the land to Rockland for the continuation of green spaces adjacent to McCarthy Farm. Mr. MacFaden noted that there may be special guidelines for transactions between municipalities that would simplify the process. He noted that money from The Rockland Land Fund could be used for such a purpose. At the close of his presentation, with thanks for his attendance, Mr. Evans left the meeting.

The committee discussed and agreed that a letter to another owner of land that abuts the McCarthy Farm would be sent.

Ms. Titus and Mr. Anderson gave information on the current status of four parcels of land approved at Town Meeting for acquisition by the Town, but never transferred. Ms. Titus said that Attorney Galvin has an associate working on the matter at the present time.

Ms. Pratt advised that she communicated with the Assessor's Office about open parcels in the Pond Street area near the Town water supply. It was noted that Rockland and Abington recently joined litigation against entities producing carcinogenic pthalates that are present in the water supply.

Mr. Cann and Mr. MacFaden advised that land at the former SWNAS has been bought by a new developer who plans to approach the Legislature about modified plans for the properties.