

Rockland Open Space Committee Meeting 3/27/2023, Town Offices, 6:30 p.m., Lounge Room

Attending: Donald Cann, Chair; Mike Bromberg, Vice-Chair; Joanne Donnelly, Pam Titus, Kathy Kirby

Abington Open Space Committee Attendees: Roberta Delaney, Nicole Emery, Aaron Parsons

Community Members: Scott MacFaden, Mary Parsons

Mr. Cann called the meeting to order. Minutes of the 3/6/2023 meeting were moved for approval by Mr. Bromberg, seconded by Ms. Kirby, unanimously approved.

Mr. Cann welcomed members of the Abington Open Space Committee and members of the community and began a discussion of development proposals for the former NAS made by the new entities that have acquired the base. He and Mr. Bromberg presented a history of the various projects that have been legislated, voted on by the towns, and changed over the years. A map proposed by the current developers was reviewed and the expansion of areas to be developed discussed. The Southfield Redevelopment Authority has approved the developers' plan. The locations of habitats for turtles and birds, currently protected, but slated for potential destruction, were noted. The understanding is that the new developers intend to challenge protected habitat designations and that they may be in communication with the National Park Service, perhaps to arrange a "swap" of Park Service land within the base for other property. Thompson's Pond in Abington is still owned by LStar, LLC, the prior developer that defaulted on its obligation to acquire and protect open space adjacent to the base in exchange for Rockland's ceding open space within the base. Items deemed to be "open space" in the new proposal include bodies of water, gardens, lawns, tennis courts, swimming pools, streets, utilities, storm water management sites, infrastructure "serving...uses inside or outside of the OSD, solar installations and other uses similar to the foregoing." (New England Development proposal accompanying John Twohig's letter of 3/7/2023 to the SRA.) Ms. Parsons noted that the developers want to reconfigure the water resource protection area. Ms. Kirby read from Ch. 291 of the Acts of 2014, section (19)(b) that specifies "no water shall be supplied to NAS South Weymouth from the Great Sandy Bottom Pond in the town of Pembroke."

Mr. Cann proposed meetings among Abington, Rockland and Weymouth to work toward a presentation of the history of the base, in particular, its open spaces, and the towns' views on the new plans for base development. All were in agreement that this should be done. Ms. Emery suggested that having the Conservation Commissions involved would be beneficial. Mr. Cann will contact Weymouth Open Space about participation. The Abington committee members were thanked for their attendance.

Ms. Kirby gave an update of plans for the 4/15/2023 cleanup. Mr. Cann will contact the local Boy Scouts.

Mr. MacFaden advised that the McCarthy Farm conservation restriction has been recorded.

Mr. Cann noted that Whitman has the former Girl Scout Camp property in Rockland on its Select Board agenda shortly. He also noted that the 6/24/2023 Walking Tours is scheduled to perform at the Channing Church.