

Rockland Open Space Committee Meeting 9/18/2023, Chaffee Meeting Room, Town Offices, 6:30 p.m.

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

Motion to accept minutes of the 8/14/23 meeting was made by Mr. Bromberg, seconded by Ms. Titus, voted unanimously.

Mr. Cann gave a recap of the 9/15/23 meeting with representatives of New England Development at the Southfield Redevelopment Authority office at the former South Weymouth Naval Air Station. While the developer will not agree to keep to the 2017 plan for open space, it indicated a willingness to consider restrictions beyond what they have proposed for open spaces and protected areas. They have not finalized their requests to Natural Heritage for reconfiguration of areas for protected species and will not be able to complete the process until after the Town has voted on their rezoning proposal. The committee agreed that forcing the citizenry to vote on an incomplete proposal leaves the door open to changes that the residents of Rockland may not want but over which they then will have no control. It was agreed that there should be communication to the developer and Town officials about specific desires and requirements for open spaces and protected areas, amenities, trails and other features of the base. It was agreed that the Park Department should be consulted about its needs for playing fields and other recreational areas at the base.

Maps showing “green” spaces and the proposed Multi-Use Development District appear to be at odds with one another, with the latter showing virtually the entirety of the center area of the base property available for development with just a small area of the perimeter protected. Mr. Cann and Ms. Titus will review the National Park Service requirements for its properties. Ms. Kirby understood the developer to agree that all protected areas will be put in a permanent Conservation Restriction, with no possibility for future building. It was agreed that the developer should produce maps showing the dimensions, including acreage, of all areas of the base not already developed, that include the zoning, current and proposed levels of protection as open space, and proposed future construction.

The developer agreed that it would not build any access roads, except for emergency vehicle use and that it would fund the costs of additional inspectors during construction should the Town’s Building Inspector indicate a need.

The committee will meet again on 9/25/23.

