

Minutes of the Open Space Committee, Open Session, October 24, 2019

There was a meeting of the Open Space Committee on October 24, 2019, at 1:00 in Caucus Hall in Provincetown Town Hall, 260 Commercial Street, Provincetown, MA 02657

Members present: Ansley Pierce, Robin Evans, Lucy Siegel, William Mullin (by phone), and Dennis Minsky (recording)

Also present: Josee Young, Finance Director, and Tim Famulare, Conservation Agent and Environmental Planner

The meeting convened precisely at 1:00

Ms Young reported to the committee that the Land Bank fund was currently over \$2 million, although she did not have the precise figure at hand, and that approximately \$300,000 more would be added to the fund in the spring of 2020. She also reported that these funds could be used for either acquisition purposes or for maintenance and improvement projects, along with any contracted surveys that might be associated with said work; there are no limits to how much can be devoted to any of these purposes.

Minsky then moved that the committee move into Executive Session, pursuant to M.G.L. c30A Sec. 21(6) to consider the purchase, lease, or value of real estate. Siegel seconded the motion. The votes were Evans aye, Pierce aye, Siegel aye, Mullin aye, and Minsky aye. The committee then went into Executive Session at 1:15. At 1:45 Minsky moved that the committee exit Executive Session and enter into Open Session. Pierce seconded. The votes were Evans aye, Pierce aye, Siegel aye, Mullin aye, and Minsky aye, and Open Session convened thereafter.

#### Native Trees Gift Fund

Minsky brought up the status of the "Native Trees Planted on Conservation Land Gift Fund" established in 2015. It currently has a balance of \$5,000 contributed by the Provincetown Conservation Trust through its "Corks to Trees" program. Famulare reported that Eversource is paying \$17,000 to the Town of Provincetown as off-site mitigation for a project that will eliminate trees. Town administration is interested in this money going into the Native Trees Gift Fund, but their concern is that any trees planted would have to be on conservation land; the wish is that the fund could be expanded to include any public land- not just conservation land- and that it might also be used for vegetation other than trees. Minsky replied that it would only be fair to consult the Provincetown Conservation Trust on the matter, since it is the sole contributor to date to the fund; he will do so as soon as possible. While not opposed to the idea, he had some concerns that the original intent of the fund might be somewhat diluted from conservation to just planting attractive trees around town. His impression is that any expenditures have to be approved by the BOS and/or the Town Manager.

#### Dranch letter

In a matter related to the above discussion, the committee received a letter from Sherry Dranch, which basically excoriated the committee for not doing more (not doing anything really) to plant trees in our conservation lands. She suggested a site on the newly acquired Dwyer property, and also suggested that the funds be used to hire "consultants to analyze soil and other conditions and to choose appropriate saplings; followed by a paid crew to plant and maintain the new grove until it is established." Minsky responded to the letter by admitting that it is 100% correct, that the committee

has not done enough in this regard, but also that the logistical challenges of finding consultants and planting and maintaining trees are considerable. He did pledge to look into the matter immediately.

#### Open Space and Recreation Plan update

Famulare reported that due to personnel problems there has been no progress in preparing a draft RFP to secure consultants to work on this very important project. Our plan expires this month, and without an updated plan the Town cannot qualify for any grants for conservation projects.

#### Site Y

The committee again discussed the status of the Site Y area, which is town-owned land but not in conservation status. Minsky suggested that it would be good to get an environmental assessment of the land so that our actions would be better informed.

Minsky moved, and Pierce seconded, that the committee direct Famulare to reach out to environmental consulting firms to conduct an environmental assessment of the Site Y property.

The motion carried 5-0-0.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00

Dennis Minsky, Chair