

Becket Open Space Plan Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes for July 19, 2022

Committee Members in person: Al Blake (Planning Board), Ken Smith, Chair (Becket Land Trust), Meredyth Babcock (Westfield Wild & Scenic).

Committee Members via zoom: Larisa Shpitalnik (Community Preservation Committee).

Others attending: Lauren Gaherty (BRPC), Cara Farrell (BRPC), Karen Karlberg (Resident), Jeffrey Wilkinson (ZBA)

Meeting called to order at 5:10 PM. The meeting was recorded.

Meeting Minutes:

Motion made to approve June 21, 2022 minutes as written (Smith/Blake); minutes unanimously approved by roll call vote.

The Committee discussed adding one or two new members to replace Michael Lavery. Both K. Karlberg and J. Wilkinson were approached and have expressed an interest to serve. After discussion a motion was made to propose to the Select Board that the OSRP Committee be allowed to add up to two new members, and that those two members be K. Karlberg and J. Wilkinson (Babcock/Smith); the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote. K. Smith offered to send an email to the Select Board proposing this change.

The Committee began to discuss areas within Becket that are important natural resource areas worthy of conservation focus. Some of the ponds have shorelines that are still undeveloped, and some have been subdivided into many parcels. Other lakes/ponds have partially developed shorelines; highlight/promote conservation of remaining undeveloped shorelines. Areas where moose are known to be located were noted. L. Gaherty noted these areas on a large map; also noted that the map needs to show conserved lands outside Becket's borders to show potential regional linkages. The Committee also discussed outdoor recreation opportunities, including BNRC's High Roads initiative and the Jacob's Trail Highlight Footpath that would link communities in the region. M. Babcock mentioned a \$50,000 grant that will explore potential hiking routes over Gobble Mt, and she offered to get more information about this effort. BRPC will follow up with latest efforts of the highlands trail efforts.

Discussion turned to community cost of development. Studies have shown that undeveloped lands demand less community services and thus can be financial benefit to towns. L. Gaherty noted these Cost of Community Services Studies are old and possibly outdated; BRPC will look to see if newer studies are available and applicable to Berkshires. It was noted that many homes in Becket are seasonal and may not demand services of typical year-round family (e.g. demands on school budget).

Discussion turned to the results of the public survey, which was filled out by about 300 people. C. Farrell passed out paper copies of the results. The Committee was tasked with reviewing the results for help with drafting needs and actions. C. Farrell will forward to the Committee responses to the open-ended questions, which was not included in the handout.

The next meeting of the Committee will be on Aug. 16, 2022 at 5 pm and will be hybrid, both in-person and via zoom.

Motion made to adjourn the meeting (Smith/Blake); motion approved unanimously by roll call vote.