

## BOW OPEN SPACES

Final minutes, Baker Public Library

Date: September 5, 2023

BOARD ATTENDEES: Bob Dawkins, Marc Ferland, Martin Murray, Ken Demain; Absent: Harry Hadaway, Eric Thum, Frank Boucher; Members: Tom O'Donovan, Rick Silverberg.

1. STRATEGIC PLANNING (SP): Bob notes that the SP Committee will meet on the 13th and the whole board on the 20th to discuss action steps. There is our October 3rd board meeting. On October 4th, the SP committee meets again to finalize action steps. On the 20th of October, the board will have a retreat session to finalize the action steps, thus substantially completing the strategic plan. Rick Silverberg brings up the need for measurable objectives with time frames. Tom says the SP committee has done that. Rick wonders if more input should be called for from those not on the committee or the board, ie, from otherwise highly engaged members. Rick indicates he would very much like to give input for strategic planning and brings up his CV qualifications. Tom points out we are following a model from the North Branch Nature Center.

New business: Election of Officers: We need to elect new officers for our 2023-2024 year. Harry has agreed to continue as president, Bob L. has agreed to continue as secretary and Frank as treasurer for one year. Tom O'Donovan is willing to serve as the new VP. These three were nominated, discussed and elected by unanimous vote. Bob D. says he would like to nominate Ken as an honorary member-for-life director. A motion was made and accepted. Ken was approved to this position. Martin (PR) and

Bob D (membership & land conservation) were re-elected for three year terms (to 2026).

Bob notes a local resident said something about “refuse” on or near trails on private property in the Shaw Divide area (plastic sheathing, wires etc from construction). This issue is not managed by/or the responsibility of BOS as it is not on easement property.

SECRETARY’S REPORT: The report was approved and accepted.

TREASURER’S REPORT: Frank was absent.

LAND CONSERVATION: Tom began with the 11.2 acre Houghton easement. We have put in for two grants: the ARM (Aquatic Resource Mitigation) Fund & and the Source Water Protection Fund for it. For various reasons, we decided not to pursue the ARM Fund. The second grant is moving ahead. We are looking for 35-40 thousand dollars in grant money. 20K of the funding is for a stewardship fee (higher than usual for a lot of this size) which Tom will work towards justifying the amount. Also, there is an abutter encroachment which will involve some expense in re-establishing a border after significant incursion on the Houghton lot.

Sufficient stewardship funding is critical for our conservation easements. Determining boundary corners on these easements is paramount. This was brought up by Ken on the Stone Sled easement. The cost of re-determining this “lost” corner is rightfully placed on the Stone Sled corporation.

Regarding the Westover property, Tom says we put in for an ARM grant and are approved to submit a full proposal but with

“exclusionary footnotes”. A subsequent plan for this property is to conserve the back and develop the portion nearest the road (around ten units Tom says). We would get 20k in grant money, 40 acres of conserved land in a critical location and some adjacent open space.

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT:** For the fiscal year ending June 30, we collected \$6080 in total dues, \$5990 the year before. Last year, there were 89 members, 87 the year before. There is no separate report for current vs active because the report is for the full year.

Bob brought up the idea of increasing the dues but also noted we should wait til a future meeting with full attendance. It’s been some time since an increase. His proposed increases: a single individual from \$25 to 30; family \$35 to 40; supporting \$55 to 60 for single, a supporting family \$80 to 90; contributing single 80 to 90, family 105 to 115; Summit Society would stay at \$250 and maybe we should create a new category yet to be named for \$500. This will be reintroduced at a subsequent meeting.

Martin felt we’d recently increased the dues. Marc felt that are dues are “incredibly low”. We would need to say what the increase is for - ie, noting important things BOS needs to work on per Tom. Re-doing the web site, and unveiling the strategic plan are some arguments for increasing dues. Bob felt there was no need to acknowledge the increase. This would take effect in early October. Rick points out that compared to similar organizations our dues are low. Also, an annual campaign “day of giving” might have appeal.

**STEWARDSHIP:** Eric’s report was presented by Bob. The survey of the Patrick Richardson easement was completed by Fieldstone for a cost of \$5600. The original estimate was \$3000. Eric asked for an official survey map for the archives.

Carol Niegisch did some boundary checking on July 1st and will finish in the fall. She reported some brush dumping and faded boundary markers.

BOS files are to be stored online and at Baker Library in the Heritage archives.

Eric brought up the ladder on the small cliff near the brush dump and exactly where the 4100 Nottingcook boundary lies - which is close to the ladder. Whether or not it is on Nottingcook property needs answering.

Eric says he will continue to assign monitors. Currently, Carol is signed up for Knox Forest, Bob Lux for Hammond NP. We need a list of things to take on such walks, eg, paint and brush to renew blazes; lat/long of corner stones, color prints of boundary stones, unique items etc. A Stone Sled corner has not been found as well as a marker on the Old Johnson Road map as well as a few other long-standing, unresolved issues.

#### PUBLIC RELATIONS REPORT:

Martin needs to work on the fall newsletter. Getting community involvement is important. Orienteering in Nottingcook could be a public relations event. There was a spring orienteering meet but no photos taken to Martin's question. He was looking for stories about biking and bridge building. Also, announcing that the Strategic Plan is to be completed this fall.

Re the web site, Martin says the timing is good to improve the web site...changing it from '.com' to '.org' for one thing. Our amount of storage was questioned by Rick. Meme Exum is a web site developer by trade, is donating her time and will be keeping the website current. The addition/utility of a donate button was brought up.

Martin also spoke of information going to both his and Bob's data base (and Frank's data base as well). This needs melding or consolidating for ease of work flow.

Bob asks if we can use both PayPal (and credit cards) on the web site.

#### TRAILS REPORT:

Marc says he doesn't have much in the way of new information. He reports the Boundary Trail bridge is built, at a cost of \$750. Tom says there is an 18 year-old bridge in Nottingcook Forest also in need of repair on the Sheridan Trail. A discussion about several bridges needing nonskid chicken wiring cover ensued.

Marc brought up the yearly budget for trails which has been \$1500. We will talk about a trails budget in the fall Bob says.

Tom points out Marc's contribution to the Bow Recreation mountain bike rides over the summer.

Again, he thanks the anonymous trail angels for their work.

Lastly, Martin says he was on Great Hill for the supermoon which was well attended.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Lux  
Secretary  
Bow Open Spaces