

ROCKLAND OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE MEETING, 2/6/2025, 6:30, LOUNGE, TOWN OFFICES

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

Mr. Cann opened the meeting with a discussion of administrative matters. Ms. Titus moved, Mr. Snee seconded, approval of the minutes of the 1/23/2025 meeting. Voted unanimously. Mr. Cann related a conversation with Eric Joubert, relative of David Joubert, now deceased, whose family owns a parcel of land near the McCarthy Farm. Mr. Cann was advised that the family has not yet decided what to do with the lot, but will let Mr. Cann know when they do. Town Administrator, Mr. Lapp, instructed the CPA to authorize money for an appraisal of the Camp Alice Carleton property. Mr. Cann attended the 2/5/2025 CPA meeting and advised that the CPA will ask for a maintenance plan for the parcel. Mr. Cann discussed the possibility of changing the OSC letterhead.

Pursuant to angry response from the Select Board about the OSC Annual Report, which report was submitted prior to the 2/4/25 deadline, the committee discussed changes that might mollify the Select Board. After much discussion, a new draft presented by Mr. Cann, with an addition by Mr. Bromberg, was motioned for approval by Mr. Cann, seconded by Ms. Titus, and voted unanimously. Mr. Cann moved, seconded by Ms. Titus, that the original draft prepared by Mr. Snee and the list of unanswered questions previously presented to the Select Board and Town Planner be included in the minutes of this meeting. Voted unanimously. The committee was advised that the Select Board agreed to extend the 2/4/25 deadline for submission of the Annual Report of the OSC.

Mr. Cann will contact Select Board Chair, Tiffanie Needham, member Michael O'Loughlin, and Town Administrator, Mr. Lapp, requesting that they meet with the OSC to discuss matters that need clarification.

In 2024, the Town of Rockland Open Space Committee (OSC) made progress on our mission to maintain the Open Space and Recreation Plan and encourage the establishment of open space and conservation easements and/or gifts of open land. Namely, we provided comments and advice pertaining to protecting open space and work to resolve existing land grants and expand open space to achieve our vision of a Ribbon of Green around the town of Rockland. These efforts will continue into 2025.

The OSC began 2024 by crafting detailed comments to the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) Massachusetts environmental Policy Act (MEPA) submission prepared by the developer of the former South Weymouth Naval Air Station (NAS), as we have for over 20 years with various developers. Due to time constraints for submitting comments, the OSC submitted comments on the last day of the 30-day comment period

The OSC and a representative of the Wildlands Trust met with the Town of Whitman's special committee to make recommendations for the future use of the Camp Alice Carleton property, which abuts Rockland held McCarthy Farm land. Camp Carleton is a former Girl Scout camp, zoned R1 and R2 in Rockland. Both the Whitman special committee and Whitman's Board of Selectmen voted to approve a sale of Camp Carleton to the Town of Rockland as open space with conservation restrictions. We are exploring funds, including CPA grants and conditions of placing similar conservation restrictions as exist on McCarthy.

The OSC worked with the Assistant Town Manager, Ms Courtney Bjogaard and Town Planner, Ms Allyson Quinn to perfect the acquisition and recording of six properties gifted to the Town, all of which were voted into acceptance at Town Meetings, but never finalized by the Town of Rockland. These properties included Tedeschi and Channing Church parcels and parcels from the Howard family. The OSC, Assistant Town Manager, and Town Planner are working with the Town Counsel, Mr Robert Galvin, to locate deeds.

For 2025, the OSC is working with the Town Planner to secure funds to develop the Town's Open Space and Recreational Plan, which will expire in July 2025. We are also identifying representatives from other Town Boards and Committees to develop an Amenities Plan for Rockland's portion of the former South Weymouth NAS. We will continue to work with the Rockland Select Board, Town Administrator and the Town of Whitman to secure the Camp Alice Carleton property. We shall also continue to track down six un-perfected properties from previous Town Meeting votes, as well as three more parcels near the Whitman camp property identified by the OSC as needing clarification

The Rockland Land Fund, maintained by the Wildlands Trust for Rockland Open Space is growing. Tax deductible contributions may be made to the fund through the Wildlands Trust.

Ms. Joanne Donnelly resigned from the committee for personal reasons in 2024. The OSC is thankful for Ms. Donnelly's contributions during her tenure and we would welcome her back should she wish to rejoin. The OSC was fortunate to welcome our newest member, Mr Richard Snee, who was appointed to the Committee at the August 13, 2024 Select Board meeting.

Respectfully submitted,