



**Amesbury Open Space, Natural Resources, and Trails Committee
MEETING MINUTES
February 26 2025, 7:00 p.m.**

This meeting was conducted under the "Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law" G.L. c. 30A, Section 20, signed on March 12, 2020.

Attending:

- Call to Order: Present – Jonathan Sherwood, Rich Hucksam, Fred Zackon, Michelle Faucher, Jessica Redfern, Pascal Rettig. City: Amanda Armington
- Minutes from January 22, 2025 meeting not available, no action taken.
- Public Comment: none
- Communications:
 - Jesssica Redfern had sent message to Mayor Gove and Joe Buckly (DPW) regarding the OSNRTC recommendation to change mowing status of south hill at Woodsom Farm (in order to promote grassland bird breeding) and move fireworks to Labor Day weekend or other date after August 15. Mayor Gove and Joe Buckley (DPW) both responded with opinion that the City is not required to alter the mowing practices because of the Natural Heritage designation noted in the Audubon report for Woodsom Farm and that there is no plan to change the mowing schedule and move the fireworks to a date other than July 4.
 - City has requested a summary of costs and deliverables for the ARPA funds. Sherwood will develop summary and send to Mayor's Office.
- Projects:
 - Town Forest Trail Reblazing: The reblazing of trail markers and the creation of primary 'outer loop' trails at the Town Forest was a priority and high impact recommendation from the 2024 Trail Assessment report. Following up on that prioritization, the Lake Gardner Improvement Association / Amesbury Trails has put together a working group to review the recommended loops and come up with a concrete plan for locations, marking, and signage. Once developed, plan will be submitted to Conservation Commission (as owner of parcels) for approval – target date – April 2025 Con Comm meeting. Nick Cracknell is following up with the landowner of an adjacent parcel that has a trail portion for one of the proposed loops; he will seek temporary/conditional permission to route one of the trails through a back part of their parcel (74 Kimball Road).

- Invasive Plant Removal: Sherwood relayed the interest of a few members of Lake Gardner Improvement Association to initiate some removal of invasive plant species, particularly in the Powow Hill Conservation Area. The removal of invasive plant species is a recommendation in the various land management reports that the City has developed, as well as in the general conservation management principles document developed by Mass Audubon Ecological Extension for the City. What is needed is an organized and explicit pathway with the City and the Conservation Commission for how to undertake plant removal projects. Conservation Agent Worthington agreed to consider what a process for such projects would be, so that volunteer removal efforts could be organized and conducted.
- Referrals:
 - Conceptual public use plan for 128 Kimball Road: The City is pursuing the purchase of the parcel at 128 Kimball Road. The parcel has considerable shoreline along the Powow River upstream from the drinking water plant and contains one of the ends of the Archbrook culvert. City proposes to purchase the parcel primarily for drinking water protection purposes and secondarily for passive recreation purposes. The City would remove 'camp' structures onsite, create a small dirt parking lot, create a non-motorized water vehicle launch area and create a trail loop around the property. City is seeking a letter of support for a drinking water grant application. The parcel shows up as a high/critical priority on a number of the prioritization maps from the 2020-2027 Open Space and Recreation Plan, including drinking water protection, resiliency, and habitat. Zackon moved to provide letter of support to City for purchase of property and improvement plan, Rettig seconded. 5 voted yes, Redfern abstained (as nearby property owner). Sherwood will send letter to City
- Adjourned 8:30 p.m., Zackon motion, Redfern second. Unanimously approved.

Minutes unanimously approved at March 26, 2025 meeting, respectfully submitted by Jonathan Sherwood, Chair, OSNRTC