



Community Preservation Committee

Wednesday, August 20, 2025

City Hall Auditorium

62 Friend Street
Amesbury, MA 01913

6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

MEETING MINUTES

Chairperson Egan called the meeting to Order at 6:05p.m.

Roll call

Chairperson Egan takes roll call.

Present: Suzanne Egan (SE), Michelle Faucher (MF), Wayne Griffith (WG), Andrew LeFleur (AL), Bob Manseau (BM), Joe Nice (JN), Mel Webster (MW), Jay Williamson (JW)

Absent: Joe Fahey (JF)

City Staff: Howard Snyder (HS)

1. Administrative

Minutes of May 21, 2025

SE calls for a motion to approve the CPC meeting minutes of July 16, 2025.

MOTION by Wayne Griffith to approve minutes of July 16, 2025

Second: Bob Manseau

No discussion

Vote: 6-0. Motion passed unanimously. (AL abstained)

Community Preservation Coalition: Annual Dues

SE briefly reviews last meeting's discussion of Community Preservation Coalition. States annual dues to support their effort and available CPC administrative funds to pay invoice.

WG states first year was free and asks if invoice is for second year of CPC.

HS states first year is free as Amesbury was in first year of collecting and establishing designated CPA funds. Describes process to approve invoice at CPC meeting and then City Council will approve use of administrative funds to pay invoice.

MOTION by Bob Manseau to approve payment of invoice.

Second: Joel Nice

No discussion

Vote: 7-0. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Community Preservation Plan

Meeting with Open Spaces, Natural Resource, and Trails Committee (OSNRTC)

SE reviews purpose of meeting with the OSNRTC for the Community Preservation Plan and outlines meeting format of a 15 minute presentation followed by questions from CPC members.

Jonathan Sherwood (JS), Chairperson of the OSNRTC, introduces himself and other members of the OSNRTC in attendance – Fred Zackon (FZ), Jessica Redfern (JR), Michelle Faucher (MF), Amanda Armington (AA) (Conservation Commission agent).

JS starts presentation. Reviews OSNRTC as established by City Council in 2016, its purpose, and role as an advisory committee that helps to inform the policies of the City Council. Discusses nexus with CPC is open space and passive recreation as the OSNRTC does not have focus on active recreation but notes the 2020-2027 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) is robust and does. The OSRP is a document often referenced by the OSNRTC. Membership is composed of a city councilor, a conservation commission member, a planning board member, and four citizens. MF is the OSNRTC's appointment to the CPC.

JS explains focus of OSNRTC is with open space, natural resources, trails and passive recreation such as hiking, walking, bike riding – those types of recreation uses that don't involve built infrastructure. Reviews OSNRTC activities and achievements over last nine years that include work with MVPC and City on facility inventory, publications, and work on preserving Woodsom Farm and similar properties.

JS outlines OSNRTC approach to working with the CPC – Not to re-invent the wheel. Leverage existing documents and previous planning efforts. Reviews relevant Goals and Objectives in the OSRP. Emphasis on improve / expand across spectrum of residents, resources and the value of ecosystem services provided by Amesbury's open space.

JS describes more specific high level goals from the Open Space and Recreation Plan:

- Goal #1: Preserve, restore, enhance, and acquire natural resources. CPA uses include acquisition, create, preserve, and restore open space – the land is the resource. Potential to set aside money every year until acquisition – chapter 61a and example of 128 Kimball Road.
- Goal #2: Maintain, enhance and create passive recreation facilities for residents and visitors of all ages, interests, and mobility. Priorities of rectangular field creation, hard courts, playgrounds, and Riverwalk improvements. Start with projects with the greatest reach.
- Goal #3: Improve care, management, and awareness of existing protected land, natural resources and recreation facilities. Priorities include trail and wayfinding signage, invasive plant mitigation, trail improvements, update OSRP, purchase plant control, and trail management supplies and tools. Can't use CPA to improve recreation facilities as much as to make them, especially on non-CPA acquired land. Article 97 land exception and lands with long-term protection.
- Goal #4: Improve access to and connectivity among open spaces, recreation facilities, and other city resources. None of Amesbury's passive and active recreational facilities are all-person accessible. Implement all-person trails at Woodsom and Battis a priority. Fund

accessibility plan for recreational facilities.

JS summarizes leverage existing OSRP to inform CPA priorities. Use OSNRTC as sounding board to set priorities. Expand access to recreation assets. Long-range funding for larger recreation projects.

SE thanks for the presentation and asks CPC members for questions.

WG complements committee on their work. Question on money allotment. What other land in the community should be considered for acquisition?

JS responds OSRP notes specific parcels. Color coded prioritization maps. Chapter 61a and 61b are of real interest for future preservation activity. Not every parcel has equal value – farmland of the greatest interest. Discussion on 128 Kimball Road as an example.

AL asks what are the hurdles to stewardship activities? Monetary?

JS responds that the hurdles are more practical. Challenges of organizing people and permitting for improvements. Regarding the goals, it would be money.

Al asks about priorities and low-hanging projects that would be more easily tackled immediately.

JS replies the goals outlined and their elements are the priorities but not ranked.

Al states in the future identification in terms of value versus dollars would be helpful. Asks what about shared costs on trails shared with other communities.

JS responds some shared trails are funded with Commonwealth and Federal government funds. There is a cross community effort.

HS how the question of hurdles relates to how the city is involved in potential development projects, and city's effort to coordinate open space and trail systems with connection to others on adjoining or nearby properties.

BM asks if one opportunity were to be selected, what pops out as the greatest one?

JS states he doesn't speak for the whole committee.

(Other OSNRTC members come to the lecturn to speak)

FZ states that what comes to mind immediately when thinking of the challenges and priorities is participation, knowledge, recruitment of volunteers get citizens involved. Community building.

JR states funds to acquire land. Working with Greenbelt on land purchases and teaming on grant funds.

JS Commonwealth more supportive of funding projects with local (CPA) funds added. Current OSRP involved an on-line survey process. Really helped to identify the places that people went to that should be prioritized.

JN spoke to use of bonding and purchases.

JS discussed use of bonding for larger scale and costs projects that can be planned for in advance with long-term commitment for funding.

JN spoke of people involved in the softball and soccer communities asking about new fields. How can they coordinate with you on improvements and acquisition?

JS spoke of the challenges of coordination and gaps in the information. There was definitely input on active recreation into the OSRP but it is not a focus of the Plan.

HS spoke about the CPC inviting active recreation stakeholders to a future meeting of the CPC.

MW mentions CPC places 10% every year into open space and recreation fund.

JS speaks about active recreation could spend that money very quickly. 10% spending on open space acquisition would not have something immediate. Active recreation would.

MW spoke of a potential purchase of 61a land and if bonded acquisition. Would add to that open space bucket every year.

JW spoke of his move from Newburyport to Amesbury made it an attractive move due to the available open space. Asks about how committee was established to fill a gap between open space and recreation, and if there is an annual operating budget that is earmarked or is it strictly volunteer.

AA spoke that Conservation Commission does have wetland protection funds and many of the city's open space areas is subject to Conservation Commission jurisdictional control. It hasn't been done much in the past but theoretically those funds could be used in those jurisdictional areas.

JW asks if there are expenses beyond volunteering, is there a ballpark amount that you experience annually?

JS states most of trail maintenance is done by volunteer groups, such as the Lake Gardner Association, that spend their own money. They use fundraising. Ballpark on trail stewardship is a few thousand dollars but that goes a long way in maintenance.

SE asks about Camp Kent and if the committee has any interest in its use or priorities.

JS responds that only tangentially. There is discussion and a study that involved the Battis Farm area and the Powwow Conservation Area (Lake Gardner beach to Camp Kent).

HS adds thoughts that many may perceive OSNRT as active in open space that is more in the fringe and rural parts of Amesbury. Asks if the committee gets involved in the more highly populated areas.

JS responds mostly in the latter as that is where the larger open space areas are situated. Recent work with the Mayor and City Council includes preservation across the city and not just in the more rural parts. Things like the Riverwalk in the more urban areas has certainly received the committee's attention but mostly the larger parcels have our attention. There are great opportunities with the CPC on in-town facilities like playgrounds. Collins Street Park, Whitehall Road parcels, Woodsom Farm parcels have opportunity for connectivity and recreation activities.

3. Next Meeting Date

HS notes the third Wednesday of September 17th and the guest speakers will be Historic Preservation.

MW speaks about how at the last meeting we talked about inviting people from the recreation department. Are we still doing that or are waiting until a recreation committee is formed?

HS states that we are still inviting the stakeholders that are involved in active recreation.

4. Adjournment

Chairperson Egan calls for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION by Wayne Griffith to adjourn.

Second: Bob Manseau

No discussion

Vote: 8-0. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.