



AMESBURY

CITY HALL
62 Friend Street
Amesbury, MA 01913

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By City Clerk at 12:35 pm, Aug 29, 2024

Amesbury Open Space, Natural Resources, and Trails Committee MEETING MINUTES June 25, 2024, 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: Jonathan Sherwood, Fred Zackon, Rich Hucksam, Pascal Rettig, Michelle Faucher, Bill Geizentanner (Mass Audubon)

- Call to Order
- Minutes from April 24, 2024 and May 29, 2024 meetings: Rettig moved acceptance, Hucksam seconded. Unanimous.
- Public Comment: None at this time
- Communications: None at this time
- Chair's Report:
 - Contracts being finalized for Matthew Simth (Woodsman Inc) for a trail assessment and Bill Geizentanner (The Collaborative) for land management report for Battis Farm and Powow Hill Conservation Area.
 - Sherwood summarized June 20, 2024 meeting at City Hall with Mayor Gove, Bill Geizentanner, Sherwood, Joseph Buckley, Mayor's staff, and representatives from Public Safety. Focus of meeting was on the mowing plan at Woodsom Farm and, in particular, the recently revealed designation of part of the south hill at the Farm as a [Priority Habitat Area](#) by the Commonwealth. This designation, triggered by the reported presence of eastern meadowlarks in the area, appears to restrict uses and practices at the site. The City has been in communication with the Commonwealth; the Commonwealth affirmed this designation and the requirements that it entails. This designation may require that the area cannot be mowed until after grassland birds have bred and fledged from the site each year; mowing activity will require a request and permit from the Commonwealth to occur. This would be a change from current (and planned) mowing to discourage breeding, for purpose of clearing the hillside for July 4 fireworks viewing. If left un-mowed, fireworks would need to be moved outside of the May 15 – August 15 breeding window. Public safety indicated that there was no problem with that on their end, only advantages (the event can be a challenge to cover, even with mutual aid). Mr. Buckley will continue to gather more information from the Commonwealth regarding this issue. There was no resolution about changes to mowing plans.
- Referrals: None at this time

- Scheduled Business:

- Discussion of management recommendations from the Town Forest – Woodsom Farm Management Report. Discussion ranged across the broad content of the report and its recommendations, though much time was spent discussing the general cluster of recommendations regarding grassland bird breeding, management of the fields, and public education. No specific recommendations were voted on for forwarding to the City and the Conservation Commission; OSNRTC will continue this discussion at the July 2024 meeting, with aim to finalize recommendations for transmission.

Motion to adjourn //

Minutes unanimously approved at X/XX/XXXX meeting, respectfully submitted by Jonathan Sherwood, Chair, OSNRTC