

## Casco Open Space Commission Meeting Minutes – Final

Meeting Date: February 26, 2018\*

Call to Order: ~ 6:40 P.M.

Present: Open Space – Acting Chairman Keith Morehouse, Tom Peaslee and Eric Dibner

Current Agenda and December Minutes: Eric moved approval, Tom seconded – all approved.

Old Business:

State Park Road Sale Offer; Keith advised that phone contact had been made with the owners, post-purchase and sale agreement, and they didn't have any remaining issues.

Heath Property/Pine Hills Focus Area (Focus Area 1); Keith advised that phone contact had been made with these property owners and that there weren't any remaining issues there, also. It was noted that the Select Board, at their February 27, 2018 meeting, had been briefed by the Open Space Commission on the recommendation to accept the offer to sell to the Town of Casco, at a bargain price, 14.5 acres of land with waterfront on The Heath. The Select Board voted to warrant the action for Town Meeting in June of 2018. The property has Focus Area importance; it would be the first parcel to be conserved under the Casco Open Space Plan. A pre-approval purchase and sale agreement has been initiated.

Conservation Easement for Open Space Purposes; Keith reviewed the status of this effort. Conservation Easement-related materials of a variety of types and from a variety of sources have been mailed to the owner. Phone contact was made with the owners and the response was that they are still interested in the easement. At some point soon, there should be contact with an appraiser/assessor to determine the approximate reduction of market value of the property post-easement. The walk-around for this property still needs to be carried out, hopefully in late-March weather permitting.

Open Space Budget Request; Both Operations and Acquisition Town Open Space budgets were reviewed. The Commission members discussed the Open Space budget forwarded to the Town Manager and Select Board following the last COSC meeting. There was further discussion of budget needs in reference to The Heath property. It was noted that the Open Space budget would very likely be an item of business at the Finance Committee meeting on March 14.

Status of 2017 Annual Report; The report has been sent to and reviewed by all of the Commission members and is ready for posting. There was a recommendation by Eric that, in the anticipated 2018 action section, there should be some mention of our current effort to review and possibly recommend changes to both the Open Space Policy and the Open Space Ordinance, to be warranted for Town Meeting. The recommended change will be made.

Open Space Ordinance and Open Space Plan; Members discussed briefly the review of these two documents. One of the recommendations, not fleshed-out, was that any amendment to the Policy could spell-out in more detail the nature and/or value of resources contained in the various Focus Areas.

It was suggested that the Town Manager and the Town's Attorney, at some point, need to be involved in the reviews and final amendment language. Amendments also need Town Meeting approval.

**New Business:**

Landowner Letter Distribution; The group just quickly reviewed the actions that had been taken by Town Office Staff to make this letter more available to the general public – which is that copies have been made available in the waiting area.

Landowner Letter Distribution to Focus Area Landowners; The group decided that this item would be taken-up in a more serious manner at the beginning of summer, likely May or June.

Meeting Dates; There was included a change to the agenda that dealt with scheduled meetings. The COSC meetings occur on Mondays, which is a day on which fall a few holidays – which can sometimes be a problem. However, after a bit of a discussion, it was decided that we would not change the base meeting days (Mondays) but that we could on occasion, if warranted, make changes and post those changes on the Town's website – giving the public ample notice.

Public Participation: None

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned about 8:00 P.M., with unanimous approval. The next scheduled COSC meeting is March 19, 2018, at 6:30 P.M., in the Town Center meeting room.

Submitted by Keith A. Morehouse

\*Please note that the meeting was delayed for a week due to illness. There would not have been a quorum (3 voting members) if the meeting had been held on the scheduled date of February 19.