

Town of Wayne Open Space Committee
Minutes of August 28, 2017 Meeting
Accepted 9/25/17

Attendance.

Committee Members. Present: Trent Emery, Steve McLaughlin, Ford Stevenson, Chris Cushman, Margaret Lane, Bruce Mercier, Ken Spalding.
Absent: Lloyd Irland

Staff. Aaron Chrostowsky

Others. Bill Williams, Deputy Executive Director, MWO

Meeting started at 7:04 PM

Ford Stevenson invited Bill Williams of the Maine Woodland Owners (MWO) (formerly Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine(SWOAM)) to talk to the Committee. Bill was present and the meeting started with a presentation by him to the Committee. Bill is Deputy Executive Director of MWO and head of its land trust.

Bill first gave some general information about MWO and its land trust. He reported that the land trust owns about 5,000 acres and holds easements on about 3,600 more acres. He said the MWO is only interested in the working forest aspects of land and is not interested in recreation, trails or shoreline. They pay taxes on their forestland properties at the Tree Growth tax rate. An exception is that if they have fields that they are required to maintain, they pay taxes at the Open Space tax rate.

Bill and MWO Executive Director Tom Doak visited the property. They didn't do a timber inventory, but did make a rough estimate of timber types and workability of the terrain. The general assessment was that much of the land was either low value timber or difficult to manage. He said the property would not return much money in a first harvest. He said that MWO is not a player in relation to this property.

They calculated the property as 122 acres, with 87 acres workable. Of the workable acres 42 acres is hemlock with little value, 28 acres has high quality oak and pine, there is 7 workable acres along the road and 10 acres is part of 20% that is otherwise not workable on the steep slopes West of the road. The 19 acres to the East of the road and along the shoreline is not workable due to the steep slopes and the potential for erosion into the lake.

Bill gave the Committee a map that represents the timber types and workability with the acreage of each. That map is incorporated by reference into these minutes.

Bill said that if the property were purchased for \$35,000, that amount could be made back in a first harvest by logging the entire parcel. He said this estimate has a huge margin of error. He also said that MWO would not conduct such a harvest if they owned it. Another entry in 15 years could make back Tree Growth taxes, but there would be no net gain above the taxes. He said the way MWO would manage would be with improvement cuts. He said any management decisions should be preceded by a timber inventory and management plan that he estimated would cost about \$1,500.

Bill said that the liabilities for the Town if the property is managed as a Town Forest would include:

- Contract with a forester. When harvested, the forester would get ~15% of the gross stumpage. The harvest plan and marking boundaries would be an additional cost at about \$50 to \$75 per hour.
- Contract with a logger. This would be a separate contract.
- Road maintenance. Although there is potential for being required to pay a share of road costs incurred by a road association, MWO's approach is to do work on a road after each entry so that it is in at least as good shape as before the entry.

Bill gave additional information about how MWO manages its properties, including:

- Open to the public. Allows snowmobiles with negotiated trails.
- Don't allow ATVs unless there is a pre-existing agreement. MWO knows about the damage and erosion caused by ATVs
- Don't do anything to provide for recreation, but allow others to.
- No camping. No fires.
- Allow hunting unless the donor prohibits it. No cameras or tree stands.
- Trapping is allowed.
- Taxes are paid at the Tree Growth rate, which is less than the Open Space rate.
- MWO doesn't buy property. It doesn't fundraise. Property is acquired by donation only. The donor is also required to give a stewardship donation.

To clarify some ambiguous descriptions, Ken emailed Bill with some questions subsequent to the meeting. As clarification to the above description of Bill's presentation, the questions and Bill's responses are incorporated by reference into the minutes.

Through discussion, the Committee clarified that it will gather information on each option, have a public meeting at which it will make a presentation and provide a forum for public input. The Committee will subsequently provide the Select Board with information on the options and a recommendation. The Select Board will decide on an option and they will be responsible for holding or arranging for a public meeting. This process was agreed to by consensus.

Draft minutes of the 7/31/17 meeting were discussed. In the reporting of Ford's opening statement at the meeting there was some concern that the use of the word "perceived" might be seen as pejorative. It was agreed to remove that word and just indicate what he said.

Motion to accept the minutes as amended, made by Margaret, seconded by Trent. Approved unanimously.

Les Priest did a comparative market analysis of the property. His recommendation for a list price was \$150,000 to \$200,000. The Committee agreed by consensus to use \$175,000 as the value of the property.

Ford had developed a sheet to record the pros, cons and values of the options to look at. The Committee discussed the pros, cons, revenues and costs of options and Ford recorded these on his form. The options previously agreed to and discussed were; a) sell the entire parcel at market price, b) sell non-conforming parcels to abutters to simplify the boundaries, c) the Town keeps the property and manages it for timber, d) the Town keeps the property and sells an easement to KLT, e) the Town sells the property to KLT. Ford also proposed to consider as an option selling the property in two "kingdom lots." Ken suggested that we not add this or additional options not called for in the directive from the Select Board unless the Committee agreed that it would be a beneficial option to pursue.

Aaron provided information on how much assessed value would be added to adjacent lots if specific non-conforming parcels were acquired by abutting owners. The Town assessors gave these values. The Committee discussed the need for an analysis of the sale values of such parcels and Aaron said he would ask Les Priest if he would be willing to develop values for these parcels, as well as for two kingdom lots.

Steve and Ford agreed to meet in two days to develop a format for comparing the values of the various options.

The date of the next meeting was set for September 25, 2017.

Motion to adjourn by Ken, seconded by Trent. Passed unanimously.

Adjourned at 9:52 PM.