

## Chelmsford Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee

Town of Chelmsford  
50 Billerica Rd. Chelmsford, MA 01824  
Meeting Minutes  
November 19, 2024

# DRAFT

### Members Present:

Karl Bischoff (Conservation Commission)  
Peter Spawn (Conservation Commission)  
Pat Wojtas (Select Board)  
David Sperry  
Jerry Schmidt

### Members Absent:

Paul McDougall (Planning Board)  
Brian Stripp

### Others Present:

Support Staff: David Koonce (Conservation Agent), Christine Clancy (DPW), Evan Belansky (Community Development)  
NMCOG: Meghan Tenhoff, Michael Asciola  
Middlesex Canal Commission (MCC): Doug Chandler

### Proceedings:

Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM.

The committee voted to approve the October meeting minutes as written.

Michael shared the latest schedule. Key dates are as follows:

- **Nov 19** - Link to Google Drive folder will be sent to town staff and OSRP committee today. Comments are requested in spreadsheet format.
- **Nov 26** – Comments & feedback are due, however NMCOG will continue to accept input until Dec 2.
- **Dec 2** – First draft will be released to the public.
- **Dec 5** – Open House will be held from 3:30 – 5:30 PM in the McCarthy Conference Room at the Chelmsford Public Library. Michael will make a presentation at the beginning of the meeting to showcase the OSRP draft and solicit comments. All OSRP committee members encouraged to attend if possible.
- **Dec 13** – Second draft will be released to the public with comments incorporated.

Michael & Meghan will present the final plan to the Conservation Commission and also to the Select Board. Dates for these presentations are still being finalized; targeting late December or early January.

Meghan reviewed Section 8 Goals & Objectives with the committee. Comments and feedback are shown below:

- Goal 1 / Obj 1.1 / Action
  - David K: suggested town be changed to “town-owned” and give examples, such as Varney Playground, Sunny Meadow Farm, Heart Pond, and Southwell Field.
  - Peter: suggested adding a quarterly article to the existing newsletter.
  - Peter: recommended that we delete “with local events and activities” so we are focusing on static information, like trail maps, instead of dynamic information, like events.
  - Evan: emphasized that we need to keep this town focused.
  - Peter: suggested we upload updated trail maps.
- Goal 1 / Obj 1.2 / Action
  - David K: Suggested we change “explore the demand” to “explore the need and demand.”
  - David K and Christine: Recommended that we inventory the educational programs that are already available and promote those.
  - Peter: suggested we partner with water districts and highlight storm water planning programs.
- Goal 1 / Obj 1.3 / Action
  - Evan: Suggested that we replace “strategy” with “plan.” Also, delete “Community Economic Development newsletter,” because that doesn’t currently exist.
  - Karl: Suggested utilizing existing Town Manager’s framework and “other channels.”
- Goal 2 / Obj 2.2 / Action
  - Christine: Suggested we delete “operating” from first sentence.
  - Christine: Explained that the DPW annual plan prioritizes sidewalks to schools, but open space is also considered.
- Goal 2 / Obj 2.2 / Additional Focus
  - Christine: Suggested we delete “and biking” and just focus on walking for now.
- Goal 2 / Obj 2.3 / Action
  - Evan: Said that this action should reference the map that has already been created.
- Goal 3 / Obj 3.1 / Action
  - David K: Recommended that we include drinking water protection.
  - Peter: Said we need to include water connectivity to mitigate flooding. In this case, connectivity refers to how the water flows, not walking routes.
  - Evan: Said we need to complete the watershed analysis and utilize it in this action.
  - Peter: Recommended that we add another action: create an acquisition list based on updated criteria.
  - Evan: Suggested keeping this list separate instead of combining it with acquisitions for other purposes.
- Goal 3 / Obj 3.2 / Action
  - David K: Suggested we add some examples of climate-adaptive features, like cooling corridors, pavement removal, etc.

- Goal 3 / Obj 3.3 / Action
  - Karl: reminded us that there is a Community Garden Advisory Committee.
- Goal 4
  - Meghan: Said she would change the wording to “Maintain, Upgrade, and Steward...”
- Goal 4 / Obj 4.1 / Action 1
  - The group decided to change the wording from “managed conservation areas” to “managed reservation areas.”
- Goal 4 / Obj 4.2 / Action
  - The group decided that we should add “where appropriate” to the end of the first sentence.
  - Evan: Said we should identify needs using operations, land management, and maintenance plans that have already been developed.
- Goal 4 / Obj 4.3 / Action 3
  - Peter: Suggested we add the following as Action 3: “Revisit and strengthen existing land stewardship assignments” and also create a list of what we would like them to accomplish.
- Goal 5
  - Meghan: Said she would change the wording to “Expand Recreational...”
- Goal 5 / Obj 5.1 / Action 1
  - Evan: Suggested that we tie this action to QR signage.
- Goal 5 / Obj 5.1 / Action 2
  - Evan: Said that if there is documented demand for this action, we should mention the specific needs that have been identified.
  - Karl: Suggested that we scale down this action.
- Goal 5 / Obj 5.2
  - Peter: Recommended that change the wording to “underserved community and neighborhood needs.”
- Goal 5 / Obj 5.3
  - The group decided that we should focus on amenities that meet the needs of “underserved areas in the community,” and we try to combine this with Action 2 of Objective 5.1.
- Goal 5 / Obj 5.4 / Action 2
  - Evan & Christine: Suggested that we inventory everything already available and expand the capacity of existing Chelmsford Community Education programs if necessary rather than creating a new staff position.

Public Comment:

Iva Mooney: “Whose job is it to monitor the water that flows through the cranberry bog? Peter responded that “the land management plan does this for each conservation area.” Karl concurred.

Doug Chandler (MCC): Distributed a summary sheet entitled “FORTT Suggestions for OSRP” that suggested the following additions to the Section 8 Goals & Objectives, which focus on connectivity.

Doug Chandler's Suggested Edits:

- Goal 2 / Obj 2.2 / Additional Focus 2
  - After 2.2 Additional Focus, Doug is requesting that we add “Additional Focus 2: Work with neighboring towns and organizations to connect Chelmsford multi-use trails to nearby regional open spaces, trails, and commuter rail.”
- Goal 1 / Obj 1.2 / Action
  - After “environmental,” Doug is requesting that we add “and historical.”
- Goal 2 / Obj 2.2 / Interaction
  - At the end of the 2.2 Interaction, Doug is requesting that we add “and safe, non-motorized access to commuter rail for EJ communities, supporting Goal 3 (Climate Resilience).”

After reviewing Doug Chandler's request, Karl asked Mike to try to incorporate Doug's recommendations.

Meeting adjourned at 8:49 PM.

**Next Meeting:**

Tuesday, December 17, 2024 at 7:00 PM (tentative, to be confirmed)