



Town of Wenham

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Selectmen / Town Administrator
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Peter Lombardi, Town Administrator
RE: Proposed Amendments to Open Space and Recreation Committee Charge
DATE: October 3, 2018

In May 2016, the Board approved the following charge for the Open Space and Recreation Committee:

The Open Space and Recreation Committee shall be comprised of up to nine members, serving one-year terms, and subject to reappointment by the Board of Selectmen. Its composition will include residents who have a diversity of interests and experiences, ranging from interest in community character and landscape preservation to economic development and real estate, from active and passive recreation to natural resource conservation. The Committee's charge is as follows:

- *Work to deliver a comprehensive update to the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). Once completed and approved, establish a process of ongoing review and updating of the OSRP as appropriate.*
- *Based on the findings of the OSRP, work with the Board of Selectmen and other relevant Town boards, commissions, and committees to maintain a list of target properties considered desirable for protection for various municipal uses.*
- *Work with private property owners and non-profit agencies to identify opportunities to preserve open space and funding sources to support these preservation efforts.*
- *Work with the Board of Selectmen to identify properties that are better suited for development than preservation and support the creation of a strategic plan to address these opportunities.*
- *Work to support adoption of planning, zoning, and assessment practices and policies that reinforce the objective of preserving and acquiring open space in the Town of Wenham.*
- *Provide progress reports to the Board of Selectmen as appropriate or as requested, and make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen and to Town Meeting regarding the acquisition of open space for municipal purposes.*

The OSRC, as currently constituted, only has 4 active members: Asma Syed, Tom Starr, Ann Weeks, and Ernest Ashley. Since quorum is based on the total maximum number of positions on a given committee, I would recommend that the Board amend the charge down to 7 members at this point, so the remaining members can hold their meetings in compliance with the Open Meeting Law.

Further, since the OSRC has been in place for more than two years and has now formally submitted our updated Plan to the state for their review, I would suggest that we ask them and their supporting staff to revisit their initial charge and give the Board their collective feedback based on their experiences to date and what they will be working on in the next several years. As part of their reevaluation, I would also recommend that they review the Economic Development Committee (EDC) charge given the extent of overlap between the two and the fact that the 5 remaining members of that committee (including 1 non-resident, non-voting member) have not met since last fall and were not reappointed by the Board for FY19. The Board can then review the input they receive from the OSRC and determine how best to refine their charge, potentially incorporating some of those intersecting responsibilities of the EDC.

As part of this process, the Board can affirmatively decide on whether the EDC is needed as a stand-alone committee going forward. Doing so would address one of the priority goals for the Board for FY19 that was identified during our annual goal setting session this summer. It is important to note that the EDC was not identified as a Responsible Party for any of the actions listed in the Plan's Seven-Year Action Plan, based in part on their ambiguous role, lack of activity, and uncertain future.

For your reference, the EDC's current charge is as follows:

The Committee shall be comprised of up to seven members, including one non-resident who shall serve as a non-voting member, serving one-year terms, and subject to reappointment by the Board of Selectmen. The Committee's charge is as follows:

- *Work with the Open Space and Recreation Committee as they develop their action plan to implement the Goals and Objectives identified in the updated Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP), by providing recommendations on the financial viability of preserving priority parcels and identifying funding sources and scenarios.*
- *Based on the findings of the OSRP, work with the Open Space and Recreation Committee, Board of Selectmen, and other relevant Town boards, commissions, and committees to identify properties that are better suited for development than preservation and formulate a policy framework and strategic plan to address these opportunities.*
- *Establish and maintain an ongoing dialogue with business owners and owners of major properties on a pro-active basis to understand how the Town can work with them to achieve their plans.*
- *Provide advice and recommendations to the Board of Selectmen regarding the viability of various economic development projects, including but not limited to the feasibility of installing cellphone towers on town property, the proposed disposition of town-owned property, and the potential development of the Boulder Lane property.*