

# Open Space Committee Meeting Minutes

*(These are unofficial minutes pending committee approval)*

**Date:** Monday, March 31, 2025

**Time:** 7:02 PM

**Location:** Hybrid (In-Person and Zoom), Heritage Room, Holbrook Town Hall

## 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM by Carleen. It was confirmed that a quorum was present.

**Present:**

- Eric Helfer (Zoom)
- William Conrad
- Carleen Sabusap
- Denise Louis
- Brendan Potash
- Alison Bowden (Zoom)
- Cristina Lucci-McShain

**Absent:**

- Patricia Greely

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## 2. Approval of Minutes

- Denise Louis motioned to approve the meeting minutes from **February 28, 2025**, and **March 18, 2025**.
- Brendan Potash seconded the motion.
- Motion passed unanimously; all members present voted "Aye."

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## 3. Conway School Project: Progress and Updates

- General consensus was positive; members agreed the draft document was well-done.
- **Comments:**

- **Denise:** Appreciated seeing the ideas outlined clearly on paper.
- **Will:** Had technical difficulties submitting comments but sent feedback via email.
- **Brendan:** Asked about mentions of pocket parks and benches; noted the absence of specific addresses (to avoid affecting real estate values).
- **Eric:** Highlighted references to "soot lots" (vacant parcels owned partially by the town) and the need for open space in underserved areas.
- **Alison:** Applauded the natural resources section improvements and stressed that the soot lots example demonstrates broader goals for equitable open space distribution.
- **Will:** Commented on riverfront development coverage, emphasizing awareness of its uncertain property status.
- Final steps:
  - Committee members to quickly review the PDF before final printing.
  - Conway School to print and provide two copies to the Town.
  - No further rounds of edits are possible due to project deadlines.
  - Discussion about town meeting process: Select Board may suggest further changes before presentation.
  - ADA compliance will need to be incorporated.

**Note:** Holly Rose (Council on Aging) joined during this discussion.

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## 4. General Open Space Plan Progress

- **ADA Section:**
  - Eric drafted an initial ADA section based on old plans and JFK school property reviews.

- Alison confirmed Eric Erskine is expected to update and refine it.
  - Eric noted challenges due to original requirements coming from building codes rather than ADA guidelines.
  - Brendan pointed out unresolved details regarding JFK pocket parks.
  - **JFK Outdoor Spaces:**
    - Care is being taken to focus only on land use, not buildings.
    - Further input awaited from Eric Erskine.
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## **5. Discussion and New Business**

### **5.1 Temporary Pedestrian and Bicycle Counters**

- Eric reported that the Boston Regional MPO offered free pedestrian and bicycle counters to Holbrook for temporary two-week data collection.
- Purpose: to support regional planning efforts and future grant applications (e.g., assessing landfill site access).
- **Features:**
  - Solar-powered, no electricity required.
  - Can gather data independently.
- **Discussion:**
  - Denise asked if the Committee needed to choose locations.
  - Brendan questioned the value of measuring areas with low bike traffic.

- Eric noted data could still highlight lack of infrastructure and demand.
- Cristina emphasized capturing pedestrian traffic in local neighborhoods.
- Denise stressed the project's safety and grant application benefits.
- **Action Taken:**
  - Denise motioned to support participation and share information with the Select Board and DPW.
  - Brendan seconded.
  - Motion passed unanimously.
- **Next Steps:**
  - Eric will contact the Town Administrator (Mike) this week to move forward.

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## 5.2 Pocket Parks and Bench Installation

- Denise presented updates on six parks selected for new benches.
- **Bench Details:**
  - Benches priced at \$845 each (on sale).
  - Quotes and installation coordination ongoing.
  - Bob, the DPW Superintendent, agreed to assist with installation and minor site cleanup.
- **Site Challenges:**

- **Sunflower Road/Tumbling Brook:** Conservation involvement required; issues with private encroachment (shed, grass planting, dumping).
- **Newton and Jewel Avenue:** Overgrown; abutter encroachment; need for tree assessment.
- **Sylvan Lake:** Must locate benches carefully to avoid disrupting lake use.
- **Old JFK site and Pine & Sycamore:** Vacant lots identified for benches.
- **Next Steps:**
  - Site visits scheduled: Denise and Will will conduct initial surveys and sketch basic layouts for each site.
  - Benches need to be ordered promptly due to fiscal year-end deadlines.
  - Cement slab installation required (possible vendors: McCullough, Al Kurr).
  - Will suggested that sports fields by Brookeville could benefit from dual-purpose benches.
  - Brendan emphasized showcasing the new pocket parks to demonstrate progress.
- **Discussion Points:**
  - Holly advocated for more shaded spots near COA.
  - Concrete slabs preferred but not necessarily required for every bench.
  - DPW oversight and Select Board approval necessary for final installations.

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## 6. Board Reorganization Summary

The Committee discussed reorganizing leadership roles.

- **Chair:** Denise volunteered to stay on as Chair until November when the Open Space Plan is finalized.
- **Vice Chair:** Eric volunteered to serve as Vice Chair.
- **Clerk:** Cristina offered to take meeting minutes.

#### **Nominations and Votes:**

- Brendan nominated Denise for Chair; Will seconded; motion passed unanimously.
  
- Brendan nominated Eric for Vice Chair; Will seconded; motion passed unanimously.

- Brendan nominated Cristina for Clerk; Denise seconded; motion passed unanimously.

It was noted that there will not be many meetings before November, minimizing the burden on officers.

**Next Meeting:** Scheduled for **April 29th**. Alison mentioned she will be away for two weeks around that time.

## **7. Adjournment**

- Carleen motioned to adjourn at 8:06 pm
- Denise seconded the motion.
- Motion passed unanimously; all members present voted "Aye."