

Shutesbury Recreation Committee Meeting

Via Zoom

June 1, 2021

4 pm

Present: Barabara Bigelow, BZ Reilly, Elaine Puleo, Christine Marglin

Absent: Christine Robinson

Barbara called the meeting to order at 4:10 pm

Agenda:

Approval of minutes from May 4, 2021

Discuss Barbara's questions, below, that might be posed during Town Meeting

From Elaine: Franklin County Pollinator Plan

We discussed Barbara's list of potential questions and the information we can provide in answer to anticipated questions at the meeting. These are around uses of the money and recreational potential for the community garden. Barbara will try to get the garden area mowed before the meeting and then it can be staked off to show where the garden will be. A sketch of our budget would be a good thing to be able to provide if desired. Article 13 is our warrant.

Pollinator Plan: 8 Franklin towns are part, Shutesbury is not. Money and help from UMass extension are available. We could work with this around our community garden. UMass can help us be part of the project next year. We could work with the gardening club on this as well.

Next meeting: Tuesday, June 29 at 4pm.

Meeting adjourned at 4:44 pm

Questions From Barbara:

Questions we may be asked at Town Meeting and proposed answers:

1. Why start with 8 beds? How do we know how many beds are needed?
 - a. There is no guidance on-line that we were able to find on how many beds should be built as a percentage of the population. So we base this on the data we could find.
 - i. In the Fall 2020 town newsletter the committee asked town residents to fill out a brief survey. We heard back from 20 residents, 13 of whom were interested in garden plots and 5 who were unsure.

ii. This number (18) is the same percentage of the population as in Northampton (250 gardeners out of a population of about 28,500).

iii. We planned 8 beds to start because other towns reported that in the first year or two there were fewer people.

2. Will there be enough water?

a. For 8 beds that are 200 square feet each 1000 gallons is required per week. The Fire Department has offered to fill the tanks as needed. In the event of a drought, we will need to consider options such as:

i. Adding additional tanks (this is what Pelham is planning to do)

ii. Consider rain capture systems

3. Why aren't there any by-laws?

a. Because these are community gardens, the by-laws need to reflect the interests of the people involved. As the first group of gardeners commit, we will send out a draft of by-laws that are based on those used by Pelham and Northampton.

i. **If it would be helpful before Town Meeting I can pull together a table showing what is typically included in a set of community garden by-laws**

4. Is this free for anyone?

a. Many community gardens have a fee and they range between \$25 and \$50. The money is used for maintenance of shared space and equipment. Both Amherst and Northampton charge \$25.

5. There's a lot budgeted for labor. Why and who is going to do it?

a. **I'm going to wait for us to discuss this before I write the answer because I don't understand how the town hires contractual workers.**

6. Why is money being spent on something that will only be used by a small fraction of the population?

a. First, our research found that there are many tangible benefits for the participants and that many towns have created community gardens to provide these benefits to the people who want them.

b. Second, because there is currently no community garden in Shutesbury, it increases the recreational opportunities for Shutesbury residents

c. Third, Community Preservation Act money has restricted uses, one of which is "recreational use" which includes the use of land for community gardens.

d. Fourth, the benefits will reach out beyond the gardeners:

i. We are purchasing a commercial grade picnic table that will be located next to the gardens.

This gives anyone who wishes a place to meet and gather out of doors. The Shutesbury Garden Club, in its letter of support, said that the "project would enhance opportunities for residents to meet and labor in a public setting and learn more about gardening and community."

ii. The gardens would be available for Shutesbury Elementary School teachers to use in their science/nature curriculum

iii. The library has expressed interest in providing gardening classes