

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY – BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – APRIL 6, 2020**

“Approved”

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CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 6:04 p.m. on ZOOM due to COVID 19. Present were: First Selectman Eric Wellman; Deputy First Selectman Sean Askham; Board members Wendy Mackstutis, Jackie Battos, Mike Paine, and Chris Peterson. Others in attendance included: Town Manager Maria E. Capriola; Deputy Town Manager Melissa Appleby; Finance Director Amy Meriwether; Culture, Parks and Recreation Director Tom Tyburski; Planning Director Mike Glidden; Police Chief Nicholas Boulter; Tax Collector Colleen O'Connor, and other interested parties.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

Mr. Wellman said residents have e-mailed their comments and he and Mr. Askham read them. Comments can be sent to EButler@simsbury.ct.org.

Wanda Coleman wrote about preserving open space and feels this space is the survival of life on our planet.

Heather Eversdyke wrote about open space and keeping the community healthy. She also agrees with preserving open space.

Helen Peterson wrote that she endorses the acquisition study and exploration of all aspects of open space. She feels this parcel fits with the Towns profile and conservation is best for the residents.

Joan Coe wrote about the budget, COVID-19 unknowns, not acquiring more land, the golf course, arbitration costs her FOI requests, having professional ambulances in Simsbury and other issues.

Diane Nash also wrote about open space and using volunteers to help keep up with the maintenance of the open space. She feels the public wants to take care of nature and want open space.

Ashley Burke wrote that the development of open space could be devastating to the residents and how it needs to be preserved.

Judy and John Schaefer wrote about being concerned about open space and the costs and benefits of it.

Jonathan Kahl wrote about Meadowoods not being developed as the land is contaminated. The only things he would like developed in Simsbury is manufacturing. He also wrote about having fiber optics in Simsbury and changing the Board minutes.

Susan Brachwitz wrote about having open space and CPR should be two separate items in the budget. She feels the taxpayers put a high value on natural space.

Eugenia Aeschlimann wrote about putting soccer fields in the neighborhood and how that would increase traffic, noise and pollution. She also asked about what the lights would do to the neighborhoods.

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Danielle D’Ermo wrote about the Town losing their character if open space is developed. She doesn’t want to lose open spaces in the Town. She would actually like the Town to purchase more open space by using grants, etc.

Garrett Camponetti wrote that he is glad the Town has an interest in developing the Meadowood property and he would like to help get involved.

Jill Schlicher wrote about purchasing the Meadowood property and how he feels the purchase would benefit if owned by the Town.

Stephen and Kathy McDonnell wrote about open space and tax savings. They feel the Town should consider the acquisition for the long term benefits of the Town.

Derek Mogck wrote that he supports more athletic fields and feels this space should be a number one priority.

Susan Masino thanked the Board for preserving the Town during this difficult time. She wrote about The Grange and said they approved matching grants for community resilience. She spoke about Read and Seed in Hartford. More information can be seen at IOBY.com – search grange. She also wrote about preserving open space and how important it is. She said the residents have always said they want to preserve open space. She also spoke about Culture, Parks and Recreation having a master plan and making policies on open space.

David Bush wrote about supporting the purchase of the Meadowood property and he feels this makes good fiscal sense and it preserves for future generations.

Lauren Miller wrote that he feels the Library budget should be increase \$20,000 for 20/21to help expand the patron base. Simsbury seems to be behind for having materials available.

Christopher Loftus wrote about the budget and teaming up with Granby for a new radio system. We should all work together for extra savings.

PRESENTATIONS

b) Potential Meadowood Open Space Acquisition

Mr. Wellman said the Trust for Public Land contacted the Town regarding a potential purchase of 288 acres of land called “Meadowood”.

J.T. Horn, Senior Project Manager of the Meadowood Conservation purchase, gave a presentation on the project history, environmental clean-up and the attributes of Meadowood. He said some of the attributes include historical resources, community trails, agricultural soils and an opportunity for continued farming, etc.

Mr. Horn went through possible capital funding model and the action that Simsbury would have to take for this project.

After some discussion, there was no action taken at this time.

a) Autism Awareness Proclamation and Presentation

Mr. Wellman read the following proclamation:

AUTISM AWARENESS

WHEREAS, autism is the results of a neurological disorder that affects the normal functioning of the human brain, and can affect anyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic background; and,

WHEREAS, symptoms and characteristics of autism may present themselves in a variety of combination and can result in significant lifelong impairment of an individual’s ability to learn, develop healthy interactive behaviors, and understand verbal as well as non-verbal communication; and

WHEREAS, the effort to address autism continues, doctors, therapists, and educators can help persons with autism overcome or adjust to its challenges and provide early, accurate diagnosis and the resulting appropriate and,

WHEREAS, ensuring that persons living with autism have access to the lifelong care and services needed to pursue the full measure of personal happiness and achieve their greatest potential; and,

WHEREAS, the Town of Simsbury is honored to take part in the annual observance of Autism Awareness Month and World Autism Awareness Day in the hope that it will lead to a better understanding of the disorder; and,

THEREFORE, I, Eric S. Wellman, First Selectman do hereby proclaim April 2020 as **AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH** and April 6, 2020 as **WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY** in Simsbury to raise public awareness of autism and the myriad of issues surrounding autism, as well as to increase knowledge of the programs that have been and are being developed to support individuals with autism and their families.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have placed my seal and the great seal of the Town of Simsbury.

Date the 6th day of April 2020.

Eric S. Wellman, First Selectman

Ms. Mackstutis made a motion, effective April 6, 2020, to authorize First Selectman Eric Wellman to issue a Proclamation in support of Autism Awareness Month. Mr. Askham seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed,

Mr. Wellman read a letter from Jack Knoll about using blue lighting for Autism Awareness. Having Eno Memorial Hall lit in blue gives a positive message and gives the Town awareness of Autism.

FIRST SELECTMAN’S REPORT

First Selectman, Mr. Wellman, reviewed his First Selectman’s report.

TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT

Town Manager, Ms. Capriola, reviewed her Town Manager’s report.

SELECTMEN ACTION

a) Resolution to Extend Budget Process Timeframes

Mr. Wellman said the Governor issues an Executive Order No.71, which removes any in-person voting requirements, including referenda and town meetings requiring in-person votes, for the purpose of adopting FY 20/21 municipal budgets and setting a mill rate. Therefore, the Board of Selectmen needs to designate the Town’s “budget-making authority” as the final body to adopt a budget and set the mill rate. Under Simsbury’s Charter, this body would be the Board of Finance.

Ms. Battos made a motion, effective April 6, 2020, to adopt the attached resolution extending the timeframes associated with the FY 20/21 budget development process and authorizing the Board of Finance to adopt the final budget should Executive Order No. 71 remain in effect after May 21, 2020. Mr. Paine seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

b) Property Tax Deferral Program and Low Interest Rate Program

Mr. Wellman said at the beginning of the month the Governor issued an executive order that was intended to provide financial relief to tax payers who need it now. The tax deferral program would extend tax payments up to 90 days and the low interest rate program would decrease the interest for delinquent property taxes from 18% to 3%.

Ms. Capriola went through the cash flow analysis. She said the approximate tax deferral program would be \$40,000 in lost revenue and the low interest rate program would be about \$50,000 in lost revenue.

After discussion, Mr. Askham made a motion, effective April 6, 2020, to move forward with the deferment program, as outlined in the Governor’s executive order No. 7S, as well as the low interest rate program, as outlined in the Governor’s order No. 7S. Ms. Mackstutis seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

c) Tax Refunds Requests

Ms. Battos made a motion, effective April 6, 2020, to approve the presented tax refunds in the amount of \$871.90, and to authorize Town Manager, Maria E. Capriola, to execute the tax refunds. Mr. Paine seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

d) Acceptance of Donation from Friends of Simsbury Farms

Mr. Wellman said the Friends of Simsbury Farms are donating funds to make needed improvements at the Simsbury Farms Golf Course.

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Mr. Peterson made a motion, effective April 6, 2020, to accept a donation of up to \$12,000 from the Friends of Simsbury Farms to fund tee box leveling projects at the Simsbury Farms Golf Course. Ms. Battos seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

a) Farmington Valley Health District Board of Health Reappointments

Ms. Mackstutis made a motion, effective April 6, 2020, to reappoint Melissa Appleby and Susan Beardsley to the Farmington Valley Health District Board of Health for three year terms effective April 24, 2020. Mr. Askham seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

a) Regular Meeting of March 23, 2020

There were no changes to the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 23, 2020, and, therefore, the minutes were adopted.

SELECTMEN LIAISON AND SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

- a) Personnel** – there was no report at this time.
- b) Finance** – there was no report at this time.
- c) Welfare** – there was no report at this time.
- d) Public Safety** – Mr. Askham said that Public Safety is still meeting weekly, even though not it person, and the meetings have been very productive. They have been getting updates and guidance from the Health District, Main Street, etc.
- e) Board of Education** – Ms. Mackstutis said Board of Education will be meeting next week on Zoom to discuss Phase II of distance learning and how to handle the rest of the school year.

COMMUNICATIONS

- a) Memo from M. Glidden RE: Old Well Bike Path Easement Referrals, dated March 31, 2020** – there was no discussion at this time.
- b) Memo from M. Glidden RE: Disposition of Open Space Property Abutting 133 Holcomb Street Referrals, dated March 31, 2020** – there was no discussion at this time.
- c) Letter from Board of Selectmen RE: COVID-19 Response**

Ms. Battos made a motion, effective April 6, 2020, to endorse the letter on the COVID-19 pandemic that was written by the Board of Selectmen, and to share the letter with the residents. Mr. Askham seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a) Pursuant to CGS §1-200(6)(E) Attorney Client Privileged document not subject to disclosure – Legal Opinion TM/Police Commission Duties**

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Mr. Askham made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session at 7:50 pursuant to CGS §1-200(6)(E) Attorney Client Privileged document not subject to disclosure – Legal Opinion TM/Police Commission Duties and to include Town Manager Maria E. Capriola, Deputy Town Manager Melissa Appleby, and Attorney Bob DeCrescenzo. Mr. Paine seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Paine made a motion to adjourn the executive session at 9:00pm. Mr. Peterson seconded the motion. All were in favor and it passed unanimously.

ADJOURN

Mr. Paine made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting at 9:00pm. Mr. Peterson seconded the motion. All were in favor and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathi Radocchio
Clerk