



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

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OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Wednesday October 7, 2020

4:30 P.M.

SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

Call to Order

1. Public Audience
2. Approval of Minutes
 - September 2, 2020
3. Updates (Oral Reports)
 - [Parks and Open Space Master Plan](#)
 - Status of Potential Meadowood Acquisition
 - Status of Disposition of Holcomb Street Parcel
4. Policies/Policies Work Group
 - Natural Stewardship Policy
 - Agricultural Leases
 - Pollinator Pathway Program, Possible Grants
 - Other

Adjourn

Open Space Committee
Wednesday, September 2, 2020
4:30PM- Via Zoom Video Conference
REGUALR MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT

PRESENT: Eric Wellman, Margery Winters, Susan Masino, Helen Peterson, David Bush, Bill Rice

ALSO PRESENT: Maria Capriola, Town Manager, Tom Tyburski, Director of Culture, Parks and Recreation, Tom Fitzgerald, Management Specialist, and Code Compliance Officer, Tom Hazel, were also in attendance.

Absent: Anne Erickson, Tim Walczak

Call to Order

Mr. Wellman called the meeting to order at 4:33 PM

1.) Public Audience

No public audience.

2.) Approval of Minutes

Ms. Peterson commented to the fact that “commission” and “committee” are used simultaneously in the minutes. The minutes will be reflected to show “committee” instead of “commission”. The Commission members voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the July 1, 2020 and July 17, 2020 meetings as presented.

3.) Updates (Oral Reports)

Parks and Open Space Master Plan – Mr. Tyburski reported that additional comments were submitted following the joint meeting in July to Sampson & Biggs, and he received a revised document on Friday. The anticipated presentation to the Board of Selectmen is October 26th.

Status of Potential Disposition of Holcomb Street Parcel– Ms. Capriola reported that the BOS held a second public hearing in August on the matter, about 10-15 comments were received at the second public hearing. The comments of the second hearing were more so in favor of the disposition. The Board of Selectmen did not take action at that meeting and are processing all the information heard. The topic will be on the September agenda. Ms. Masino stated that she is not in favor of this for a few reasons but did appreciate the additional information provided at the second meeting. Ms. Peterson also shared the sentiments that it is not the appropriate thing to do for the Town.

Pollinator Pathway Program Possible Grants– Ms. Masino shared that Sustainable CT has a grant matching program. Ms. Masino stated that the projects can be up to 30K and they now have a new energy one that can be up to 50K. You have to raise half of what your goal is and you have to get 20 different donors to contribute to make sure there is community support and involvement for the project.

45
46 **4.) Policies/Policies Work Group**
47

- 48 a. **Natural Stewardship Policy** – Ms. Masino shared a document she pulled together as a
49 simple overview of what would be the approach and philosophy for a natural area that
50 doesn't need intervention. The goal of the document is to provide basic information
51 and answers to frequently asked questions on Natural Area Stewardship. Currently, less
52 than 5% of Southern New England is under Natural Stewardship and only a small
53 fraction is legally protected as such. The benefits of Natural Area Stewardship were
54 discussed. Ms. Masino shared that it may be useful to consider this a living document
55 and that it was reviewed by several public policy people and ecologists.

56
57 Ms. Winters stated that she thinks the document is fantastic and is above and beyond
58 what the Town has for management plans.

59
60 Ms. Peterson inquired if the document could actively be incorporated into the tools
61 needed for the Committee.

62
63 Mr. Bush stated that the term "natural area stewardship" is used and it says that "any
64 and all part of any forest", he questioned if the committee envisions identifying the
65 parcels in Town that might be coming with this umbrella. Ms. Masino stated that Belden
66 would definitely be a natural opportunity for this. She would suggest that based on the
67 new information about the Eastern Wild Way, Onion Mountain would be a place for
68 this, or at least part of it along with Ethel Walker Woods. Ms. Masino also stated that
69 the document is flexible.

70
71 Mr. Bush stated that before we adopt the toolbox, we need to know what tools are
72 going into the toolbox. He also stated that since the plan will be a living document, he
73 would like to at least have a parameter of what properties generally fit in it.

74
75 Ms. Masino agreed with Mr. Bush stating that, it cannot assumed to be the controlling
76 document, it would be something that would specifically be applied to certain
77 properties that we feel it fits and she would suggest initially to just pick the low-hanging
78 fruit and then maybe pick some more as we go along. She would see this working in
79 conjunction with the updated agricultural lease.

80
81 Mr. Wellman recommended to complete the work as soon as possible at the
82 subcommittee level and then share the document in the next Open Space packet so the
83 public will have the opportunity to provide any input and then it can be discussed
84 before adopting as a group.

85
86 Ms. Capriola stated that the Town's graduate intern would help organize the
87 subcommittee meeting and then gather the feedback for the subcommittee.
88

89 **b. Disposition of Open Space Policy**

90 **c. Other**

91
92 Ms. Masino shared that after the project started at Massacoe people contacted them that this is an
93 error that the core forest Ethel Walker Woods and this connector is not on the Eastern Wildway,
94 although it was just published in 2019. They have now fixed the error and we are now officially on the
95 Wildway. They are still doing their citizens science work Friday mornings at 9a.m at 150 Nimrod Road.

96
97 Ms. Masino shared that the 350 Committee is creating a medallion, an artist in MA helped design it. She
98 shared the design with the Committee. The goal is to have them sold online and available for pickup at
99 the outdoor movie at Simsbury Meadows on September 12.

100
101 **ADJOURN**

102 Ms. Winters made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Bush. All voted in favor. Motion
103 passed. Meeting adjourned at 5:25 pm.

104
105 Respectfully submitted,
106 Heather Taylor
107 Committee Clerk



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TOWN OF SIMSBURY NATURAL AREA STEWARDSHIP POLICY *Adopted by the Board of Selectmen on XXXXXX, 2020*

1. Purpose

The Town of Simsbury (Town) has many areas of Open Space and is committed to providing a natural forest ecosystem through a Natural Area Stewardship program wherever deemed possible and logical. This policy will ensure that people see what they want and expect in a forested nature preserve. A Natural Area Stewardship Policy allows natural processes, rather than regular active management by people, to shape a forest.

2. Locations of Natural Area Stewardship in Simsbury

The Town has acres of Open Space including meadows, fields and forest among them. While Natural Area Stewardship is possible for all or parts of any forest, this Policy is intended to be for stewardship management of the Belden Forest, Onion Mountain, Stratton Brook and Ethel Walker Woods. The Board of Selectmen can review and edit these locations with advice from the Open Space Committee.

Comment [CME1]: Work group/Staff: Please add other locations as appropriate.

3. Effective Date

This policy shall be effective immediately and shall remain in effect until revised or rescinded.

4. Natural Area Stewardship Guidelines

A. Maintenance

- i. With Natural Area Stewardship nature is in charge of maintenance. For Natural Area Stewardship areas downed, broken and dead trees are also a part of the natural esthetic and should not be maintained or cleared by Town Staff unless adverse conditions such as progressive trail erosion, total blockage of trails, threats to public health, etc.

B. Border Management

- i. Town staff and volunteers should continue to monitor borders of Natural Area Stewardship properties to prevent encroachment, illegal dumping, illegal building, etc. Encroachment includes invasive species which can affect the long-term integrity of the forest.

C. Maintaining Ecological Integrity

- i. If invasive species are identified to be removed a local practitioner familiar with Natural Area Services should be consulted as best way to do so with as

little impact to the area as possible. Native trees shall not be treated as invasive species.

DRAFT