



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, November 6, 2019

4:30 P.M.

Main Meeting Room, Town Hall, 933 Hopmeadow Street

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Call to Order

1. Public Audience
2. Minutes of March 6, 2019 Meeting
3. Housekeeping Items:
 - Selection of Chair for November 2019 through October 2020
 - Selection of Vice Chair for November 2019 through October 2020
 - 2020 Regular Meeting Schedule
4. Updates (Oral Reports)
 - Parks and Open Space Master Plan
 - Stewardship, Policies and Land Management Work Group
5. Discussion about Pollinator Pathway
6. Open Space Encroachment

Adjourn

42 Ms. Winters said it would be wise for the Open Space Commission to come up with suggested goals and
43 policies for Open Space stewardship to then refer to the Conservation Commission. She agreed that this
44 group's diverse land use representation would be a benefit in developing stewardship policies and
45 procedures.

46
47 Mr. Bush agreed with Ms. Winters, the Open Space Commission would likely produce more practical
48 policies due to the variety of stakeholders represented on the commission.

49
50 Ms. Masino echoed Mr. Bush's and Ms. Winters sentiments.

51
52 Mr. Wellman asked Town Manager Capriola if staff saw value in one commission having oversight of
53 Open Space stewardship, rather than splitting out parts of too different groups. Ms. Capriola noted this
54 commission's broad representation as ideal reason why she would feel comfortable with stewardship of
55 Open Space being placed with the Open Space Commission. She also let the group know that the Board
56 of Selectmen would have to officially delegate this responsibility to the Open Space Commission.

57
58 Mr. Rice questioned whether their needed to be language in the Open Space Commission's request to
59 the Board of Selectman regarding the Forest Commission. Ms. Capriola will confer with the Town's
60 attorney regard this issue.

61
62 **Motion:** Mr. Bush made a motion that Open Space Commission recommends to the Board of Selectman
63 that the Open Space Commission manage stewardship of open space. Ms. Winters seconded the
64 motion and it was unanimously approved.

65
66 **4.) HB5254 – An Act Establishing a Pilot Program Authorizing Municipalities to Impose a**
67 **Buyer's Conveyance Fee on Real Property to Fund the Purchase and Stewardship of Open**
68 **Space.**

69 Mr. Wellman introduced discussion on HB5254 by letting the group know that this Board of Selectman is
70 interested in learning more about this, he asked the Open Space Commissioners for their perspectives.

71
72 Ms. Winters stated that although Simsbury may never put the fee into practice, it may be wise to get the
73 Town's name on the bill now so we have options later. She said showing the Town's interest in this
74 topic could generate positive discussion on the Town's stewardship policies.

75
76 Ms. Masino mentioned that she believed the Town had previously set up an Open Space acquisition and
77 stewardship funding mechanism but that it had never been funded.

78
79 Ms. Peterson suggested advocating to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance that Open Space
80 Stewardship should be funded annually. Ms. Peterson also asked Ms. Capriola what HB5254 would
81 mean for funding for the Town. Ms. Capriola shared the conveyance fee would be not be assessed on
82 the first \$150,000 of the property sale. She provided an example that on a sale price of \$315,000 (the

83 median sales price in Simsbury) the proposed Open Space Conveyance Fee would be 1% of the amount
84 over \$150,000, in this example \$1,650.

85

86 Ms. Peterson noted that the Town must first understand and develop our stewardship philosophy and
87 then decide how to fund and follow through with stewardship management plans.

88

89 Mr. Bush questioned why HB5254 included stewardship in its title but the language of the bill did not
90 address stewardship. Because of this he would not support it at this time but would be supportive of
91 open space stewardship funding through another means than a tax.

92

93 Mr. Elliott suggested that the Town do so benchmarking and research of how other nearby towns are
94 currently funding their open space management.

95

96 Mr. Rice suggested that the Town could create a line item in the budget to address Open Space
97 management and then tax appropriately to fund this account. Mr. Rice said HB5254 would not be
98 necessary and he would not be in favor of it.

99

100 Mr. Wellman summarized that the Open Space Commission doesn't seem to be in support of HB5254 at
101 this time, the town will research other funding options for Open Space Management at a later date.

102

103 **5.) Updates**

104 ***Parks and Open Space Master Plan*** – Mr. Tyburski stated the panel made of staff, two Open Space
105 Commission Members and two Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission members interviewed four
106 firms on January 30, 2019. Weston and Sampson was the preferred candidate of the panel and the
107 Town is currently working out a contract with the firm. Ms. Masino mentioned that if possible, the
108 Town should try to fund (approx. \$4,000) a plant specialist to study Onion Mountain Park as part of this
109 process so that this area is include in the National Biodiversity Database.

110

111 ***Policies and Procedures Workgroup*** – Ms. Capriola let the group know that the Town's Planning
112 Department has been going through a period of staffing transition and that it is expected that the
113 Department will again be fully staffed in April and support staff will then be assigned to the Policies and
114 Procedures workgroup to support them in their work.

115

116 ***Belden Forest Old Growth Forest Designation Application*** – Ms. Capriola notified the group that the
117 Town had submitted its Old Growth Forest Application today. Ms. Masino who is part of the OGFN
118 shared that the Town's application will be reviewed soon and she hopes to have a ceremony in the fall
119 to formally recognize Belden Forest inclusion in the Old Growth Forest Network.

120

121 Ms. Masino also mentioned that there is a Lost Forests of New England documentary having its local
122 premier on March 28th at Trinity College.

123

124 **ADJOURN**

125 **Motion:** Ms. Winters made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:23PM. Mr. Bush seconded and all
126 were in favor.

127

128 Respectfully submitted,

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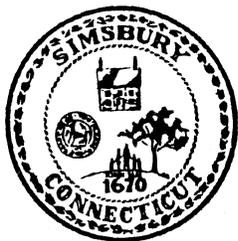
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131 **Thomas Tyburski**

132 **Director of Culture, Parks and Recreation**

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Maria E. Capriola - Town Manager

To: Ericka Butler, Town Clerk
Cc: Eric Wellman, First Selectman
From: Maria E. Capriola, Town Manager
Date: November XX, 2019
Re: Open Space Committee – 2020 Regular Meeting Schedule

At their meeting on November 6th the Open Space Committee agreed by consensus to establish a regular meeting schedule for 2020. Meetings will be held bimonthly on the second Wednesday of January and the first Wednesdays of March, May, July, September and November at 4:30 pm.

Meeting dates are as follows:

January 8, 2020
March 4, 2020
May 6, 2020
July 1, 2020
September 2, 2020
November 4, 2020

The meetings will be held in the Main Meeting Room of the Town Hall, located at 933 Hopmeadow Street. Meetings will be properly noticed in accordance with FOIA requirements.