



# Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

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## OPEN SPACE STEWARDSHIP AND POLICIES WORK GROUP

June 7, 2023

4:30 P.M.

Zoom

### REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

#### Call to Order

1. Adoption of May 3, 2023 Minutes
2. Discussion on Belden Forest Hemlocks
3. Discussion on Traprock Ridgeline Protection
4. Discussion on an Ecological Study
5. Discussion of field management at the Triangle
6. Other Business

#### Adjournment

## **Open Space Stewardship & Policies Work Group**

**Wednesday, May 3, 2023**

**4:30 PM- Via Zoom Video Conference**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT**

**PRESENT:** Wendy Mackstutis, Margery Winters, Karyn Cordner, and Susan Masino

**ALSO PRESENT:** Tom Tyburski, Director of Culture, Parks and Recreation was also in attendance.

### **Call to Order**

Ms. Winters called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM

#### **1. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the March 1, 2023 Open Space subcommittee workgroup meeting were accepted.

#### **2. Homegrown National Park co-branding update**

Ms. Masino shared that she did speak with the partner with Ms. Tallamy and she did state she is not charging the Town. She is trying to find out a little more information about what it means to be on their website versus co-branding. Her recommendation is that they think about this item a little bit more so they can make sure they understand the whole thing. Mr. Tyburski asked if this item should be removed from the BOS agenda for next week. Ms. Masino stated yes. Ms. Cordner stated as the information is being gathered and there is the opportunity for a Zoom discussion, she would love to be added to learn more. Ms. Masino shared that Avon is thinking about doing a public education session that combined Dark Skies with the Pollinator Pathways which are both under the umbrella of Homegrown National Park, she suggested maybe they could do a regional session.

#### **3. Discussion on Belden Forest Hemlocks**

Ms. Masino shared that Wild and Scenic Group Lower Farmington River are funding a grant this year for bio-control beetle release for beetles that eat the hemlock woolly adelgid. They are releasing a number of colonies in the area of Stratton Brook on private land and the group asked if Open Space wanted to have them released in Belden. The colonies are just a few hundred dollars each although some of the Hemlocks in Belden are in good shape so she still needs some additional information. She will inquire where the mortality area in Stratton Brook was.

#### **4. Discussion on Traprock Ridgeline Protection**

Ms. Masino asked if they were going to bring this item up to Zoning. Mr. Tyburski stated that Ms. Leavitt-Smith stated that this would be discussed as part of the POCD. Ms. Masino stated they can bring it up, if not before, then they can send a letter as part of

the comment process. Ms. Winters stated to assist Zoning they could look to see what other towns have enacted Trap Rock Ridge protections. Ms. Masino stated that there isn't any leg work, they just have to adopt that they are enabling the statute. She stated she also wants to get some of their information on the Open Space webpage.

## **5. Discussion on an Ecological Study**

Ms. Masino stated she didn't think anything was happening with this item as it isn't in the budget. Ms. Winters stated that Simsbury Land Trust is using the software landscape conservation and they are finding it very useful. It is a great database for all their information to be in one place and to make it easily accessible. She is looking into pricing. Mr. Tyburski commented that the Town has hired a new Assistant Planner. The land use issues discussed frequently at the meetings are more related to the Town Planner's office, the intent is that the Assistant Town Planner would be the co-liaison and could look at items through a different lens and they would know more about the Town's GIS and the abilities it has.

Mr. Tyburski shared that there is a hope to do some capital planning this summer. If there are budget requests Open Space would like to make, it is better to start getting that put together sooner so it is in the discussion for capital planning, if it is a larger project. If it is a smaller project, it might be able to be put in the internal budget using funds from the Meadowood revenues that come in annually. He stated that anything more than \$1,000 they would normally put in as a budget line item.

Ms. Mackstutis shared that because of the budget this year and looking out the next few years with the potential increase after increase in mill rate, the Board of Finance has asked to do a capital planning session.

Ms. Winters stated she isn't sure where in the budget it needs to go but they need to figure out some plan for invasive plant removal because it is only going to get more expensive. Mr. Tyburski shared that this is where that service improvement form comes in. He stated in addition to the Town Manager's or Board of Selectmen's budget, you present that service improvement with the rationale why it needs to be done with a cost and then that's what goes in for consideration. The Board of Selectmen then ranks those and then decides to move those into budget.

Mr. Masino stated that they really need an ongoing allocation stewardship. Mr. Tyburski shared that you can't leave a budget request open-ended so they aren't sure how the money is going to be spent. He suggested defining what the problem is and define how they are going to attack it with the funds.

## **6. Discussion on Meeting Calendar**

It was decided that the full meetings would be in-person and the workgroup meetings will be via Zoom. Ms. Leavitt-Smith suggested the full committee meetings be held at 5:30. Mr. Tyburski will check the meeting schedule of the other Town boards. Ms.

Masino stated that if they want to change the meeting time, they would have to cancel and re-schedule all the meetings due to the legal mechanism. Ms. Leavitt-Smith suggested finishing out the year's calendar as is. It was also suggested that the July 5<sup>th</sup> full committee meeting be held via Zoom due to the holiday.

**7. Other Business**

Ms. Leavitt-Smith stated that they are starting the POCD review. Ms. Winters asked about Trap Rock Ridge legislation in the POCD. Ms. Leavitt-Smith stated that they are putting hyperlinks in it so if there is legislation to send it to her and she can bring it to the workshop next week.

**ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 5:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Heather Taylor  
Committee Clerk