

From: Susan Mazurski January 15, 2009 11:01:06 AM  
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To: SimsburyCT\_OpenMin  
Cc:

## MINUTES

### DRAFT

#### OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – January 13, 2009

#### 1. Call to Order

Mary Glassman called the meeting to order at 4:13 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room at the Simsbury Town Hall. Committee members present were John Loomis, Margery Winters, Dunny Barney and Helen Petersen.

#### 2. Public Audience

Diane Nash stated that the Tree Committee is now under Main Street Partnership. They will be having their first meeting tomorrow, January 14th at 4:00 p.m. They will be discussing a map and what modifications it might need. This map will be used in order for the Tree Committee to move forward in terms of identifying the current treescape.

Ms. Nash stated that she will be meeting with the Director of the Main Street Partnership next week; she hopes to have the Tree Committee's missions statement drafted by then.

Regarding Arbor Day, Susan Prentice of the Tree Committee will be making a presentation in order to start gaining interest from Town residents and students.

Ms. Glassman suggested that an update on the Tree Committee be added to the Open Space Committee agenda on a regular basis. The Open Space Committee members agreed.

Ms. Glassman stated that Mr. Peck is currently drafting a letter to the Yale School of Forestry asking them to provide a student as free staff for the Tree Committee.

#### 3. Review/Adopt Minutes of December 3, 2008

Dunny Barney made a motion to approve the December 3, 2008 minutes as written. Helen Peterson seconded the motion, which was approved. John Loomis abstained.

#### 4. Review RFP's for Town Farm Dairy

Ms. Glassman stated that because Town Farm Dairy has not been paying any rent and the Town still a mortgage to pay, there is an issue financially as to how to move forward with Town Farm Dairy. The Board sent an RFP out and she stated that it is her responsibility to keep this process moving forward and to follow up on the RFP responses. The Town cannot let an

asset like Town Farm Dairy sit with no one managing or monitoring it; no revenue is coming in. The Town realizes that they do not want Town Farm Dairy to be just a farm, although they are not at the point where it is known what the farm should be or who will take responsibility for it. A plan needs to be in place as to how to move forward.

Regarding the role of the Town, Ms. Glassman stated that the outstanding concerns are: recreation needs, maintenance goals, not having a forestry plan, getting an agricultural plan, what to do with Town Farm Dairy and Dewey Farm, how an agriculture Commission could get started; how to work with Ethel Walker; how to utilize Barndoor Triangle; identifying fields for haying and how to keep these fields in hay production so they do not become overgrown; how to transition Town Farm Dairy; community gardens; and education with Ethel Walker, other schools and summer camps. Ms. Glassman stated that there is still a lot of work to be done.

Ms. Glassman stated that there were several action steps that the Board of Selectmen took responsibility for in order to move this process along.

Regarding the maintenance, the BOS will be meeting with the Land Trust to discuss how the Town and Land Trust can work together regarding maintenance issues. Regarding forestry, Gerry Toner has taken responsibility for this.

Mr. Peck has been in contact with the Agricultural Commission in Granby.

They are interested in having a regional Agricultural Commission.

Ms. Glassman stated that a report regarding recreational fields will be coming out in January. It will discuss where recreation fields currently are and what will be needed in the future.

Regarding Barndoor Hills Triangle, Ms. Glassman stated that an RFP has been drafted for the Open Space Committee to review to farm this piece of land, either some or all of the 7 acres.

Regarding Town Farm Dairy, Ms. Glassman stated that it would be irresponsible for the Town to leave the farm vacant while they figure out what to do and while they pursue the RFP proposals. The Open Space Committee needs to feel comfortable in order to proceed with the farmer that will be chosen. Mr. Barney stated that if they knew what the farmer's vision was, they could guide them to a consensus of the Open Space Committee's thoughts that came out of the Land Sakes field trip they took.

Mr. Barney suggested that the Open Space Committee meet every two weeks until they can get things determined. He stated that he understands the Town's time pressure to fill the farm, although in order to fill the farm responsibility, the farmer should have a vision that fulfills that basics of what they are looking for. It would also depend on the availability of land depending on the farmer's program and needs.

Mr. Howard, Simsbury Land Trust, suggested that an initial decision could be a short term decision because of the pressure that the Town is feeling. They can then go through the process in order to make all of the pieces fit and work together.

Regarding organic farming, John Loomis stated that he is not hearing a strong lobby from the Committee members to make the farm organic. He

stated that it needs to make sense to the community, not if the farm is organic. Ms. Glassman feels that making the farm be organic could put a burden on the farmer, although the Town could put restriction on the farm, such as no pesticides.

Mr. Barney stated that he thought this farm would be a community farm. The public and education aspects are a very important part. Ms. Glassman stated that the public and education aspects were stated in the RFP, although the RFP did not ask for proposals for community farming.

Regarding revenue for Town Farm Dairy, Mr. Walsh stated that a solution could be to rent out the apartment for one year. He also offered to continue taking care of the farm. Ms. Glassman stated that it is not realistic to have the farm sit empty for one year while the Town figures out what to do. She stated that she would not make that recommendation to the BOS.

Ms. Peterson stated that as a next step, they should set a deadline for the interviews. They will then be in a position to make a recommendation to the BOS.

There was some discussion regarding Land Sakes. Ms. Peterson stated that Land Sakes may not be the model that the Town can adhere to. Simsbury needs to create their own vision, which takes time. She feels that things need to be decided quickly; they could ask one of the RFP responders to farm the land for a short period of time while the Town figures out the big picture, even if it needs to be altered later on.

Although the vision of the Open Space Committee members is the same for Town Farm Dairy, the problem is that there is no entity taking responsibility to move things forward. Mr. Walsh offered to meet with the Open Space Committee to come up with a plan. Ms. Glassman stated that everyone wants what is best for the Town.

## 5. Discuss future uses of Meadowood Triangle

Mr. Peck stated that there will be a meeting at the end of the month with all of the stakeholders. They will be discussing uses for the Triangle and all of their options. They will also discuss the soil samples, their options and what the next steps are. Ms. Glassman stated that if they decide to farm the land, they need to have the neighbors at the meeting and involved in these discussions.

## 6. Review goals for 2009

Mr. Peck stated that it would be helpful if the Open Space Committee considered a detailed Open Space Plan. He stated that the POCD is not detailed enough in this regard.

Ms. Glassman stated that this agenda item would be tabled until the next meeting.

Mr. Barney stated that Rich Sawitzke wrote a memo dated January 30, 2001, which he asked Ms. Glassman to review. This memo is regarding a Town open space classification study. He stated that this memo discusses the 2,684 acres of open space, although this may not include the Ethel Walker land. Of these acres, if Ethel Walker is included, only approximately 800 acres is protected.

Mr. Barney questioned if the Town received the money for the Ethel Walker acquisition. Ms. Glassman stated that they have not received this money as of yet. He questioned if this money would be going into the Open Space Fund. Ms. Glassman stated that she would need to check into this. If this was bonded, then the money would need to go back into the Bond Fund. She stated that she will get this information for Mr. Barney.

## 7. Adjourn

Ms. Winters made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:26 p.m. Mr. Barney seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.