

From: Susan Mazurski May 11, 2010 2:55:08 PM
Subject: Open Space Committee Minutes 02/09/2010 SPECIAL APPROVED
To: SimsburyCT_OpenMin
Cc:

MINUTES
OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE
Special Meeting – February 9, 2010

1. Call to Order

Mary Glassman called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room at the Simsbury Town Hall. Committee members present were John Loomis, Helen Peterson and James Gallagher.

2. Public Audience

Ms. Glassman welcomed Mr. Gallagher to the Committee.

Ms. Nash stated that over one year ago she was asked to head up the Tree Committee. Since then, the Tree Committee wrote a mission statement; celebrated Arbor Day; and identified a one mile stretch of trees on Hopmeadow Street. Ms. Nash stated that she because she now serves on other Boards, she will no longer be on the Tree Committee.

Ms. Nash stated that when the Tree Committee started, they were working under Main Street Partnership. A long term plan was made for the Tree Committee and they then started working under the Open Space Committee. She stated that Debra McAlenney will be heading up the next phase of the Tree Committee.

Ms. Nash stated that a book, Speak for the Trees, was put together as a fundraiser. She is hopeful that this will be the first book for a small Tree Conservancy library of informational books.

Ms. Glassman stated that the Tree Committee is an important Committee. The Open Space Committee is very committed; this is an important priority to the Town.

Ms. Nash explained the difference for the Tree Committee being under the Open Space Committee rather than Main Street Partnership and the requirements for being under each. Ms. Glassman stated that there are

requirements under Freedom of Information. All Town Committee agendas have to be posted and minutes need to be kept. She suggested that the Tree Committee have a meeting under Main Street Partnership to discuss this issue and to make sure everyone would like to proceed under the Open Space Committee.

Mr. Loomis stated that if the Tree Committee is under the Open Space Committee, they would be a more formalized committee. He also questioned if Main Street Partnership was aware and supportive of this change. Ms. Nash stated that they were.

Ms. McAlenney read the mission statement of the Tree Committee. She stated that they also have a list of long range goals, including a tree walk along Hopmeadow Street where the trees have been identified. She stated that Mr. Roy is looking into a GPS-type system for the tree walk. A person could walk up to a tree, dial a number on their cell phone, and receive pre-recorded information about that tree. Ms. Glassman stated that she believes this would be the first community in Connecticut to have this.

Ms. Glassman asked the Tree Committee to send the Open Space Committee a letter stating that they are ready to move to Subcommittee; a list of members; and their mission statement. She stated that this is needed so the Tree Committee can be formally appointed, if they so choose.

Ms. McAlenney stated that the other long term goals of the Tree Committee are to develop a long term maintenance plan for the existing trees that the Town has and also to establish a fund to help pay for the tree maintenance. She stated that because people often want to donate trees in memory of loved ones who have died, the Tree Committee would also like to develop landscape plans for future tree planting locations. Recommended tree species are also important so that the trees that people are picking fit in with the landscape and what the Town is trying to achieve.

Ms. McAlenney stated that the Tree Committee would also like to redesign and repurpose Schultz Park. They would also like to have a tree plan for Simsbury Farms and Memorial Park and also a long range planting plans for other Town properties. Along with this, they also need to identify the maintenance issues in keeping up all of the trees. Ms. McAlenney stated that the Tree Committee would also like to eliminate invasive plants on all Town property. She stated that the Tree Committee has a big, solid list of things that they would like to accomplish.

Ms. Peterson stated that, as part of the Tree Committee's next meeting, they should invite residents in order to give people an opportunity to volunteer. She stated that the Tree Committee needs to get the word out that they are a committee and that they need help.

Susan Prentice, a member of the Tree Committee, stated that they were discussing possible names for their committee. She stated that after doing research, she found a great Town in Ohio, who has a website devoted just to their Tree Commission. She suggested having a link off of Simsbury's Town website for their Tree Committee. She stated that she would send this link to Ms. Glassman for her to look at.

3. Review/Adopt minutes of Regular Meeting October 7, 2009

Several edits were made to the minutes.

Mr. Loomis made a motion to approve the October 7, 2009 minutes as amended. Ms. Peterson seconded the motion, which was approved. Mr. Gallagher abstained.

4. Discussion on possible donation of open space at Lake Basile

Mr. Peck stated that the property in question is part of Lake Basile, which is in East Granby.

Attorney Isaacson distributed a property proposal to the Committee members. He stated that this is a unique piece of land in many respects. This land is a portion of Lake Basile and the one acre adjoining parcel in East Granby. It is adjoining that portion of Lake Basile, which is not only in the Town of Simsbury, but owned by the Town of Simsbury. He stated that this would be an addition to a piece of the Lake which the Town already owns.

Ms. Glassman asked if this property has been offered to Granby or East Granby. Attorney Isaacson stated that it has been offered only to East Granby, although they have declined this offer.

Attorney Isaacson stated that Lake Basile is currently owned by the Town of Simsbury, a homeowners association in Granby and a subsidiary of Webster Bank.

Ms. Glassman questioned if there were any structures on the property to convey. Attorney Isaacson stated that the proposal is for 7.89 acres of water and approximately one acre of vacant land.

Attorney Isaacson stated that this piece of land would be very easily attachable to the Town of Simsbury. They are willing to give this land to the Town of Simsbury and are willing to pay any costs involved in conveying it to the Town.

Mr. Gallagher questioned why the Town would want this land. Ms. Glassman suggested sending this request with their concerns to the Town Attorney for his review. She stated that they need to decide if there is any Town benefit from receiving this land. The condition of the property is also needed; there are many questions that still need to be answered.

Mr. Loomis stated that there are many issues that need to be known, including maintenance of the pond, which was drained many years ago. He stated that a resident nearby this piece of property stated that there are large beaver dam backups in the area; debris is deposited near the spillway; and the condition of the water is unknown.

Ms. Glassman stated that more information is needed on the condition of Lake Basile, the water quality, the maintenance issues, the liability issues, the Town Municipal issues, accessibility, and whether there is any public benefit to the Town in pursuing this option.

Mr. Gallagher made a motion that the Open Space Committee refer the issue of the possible donation of open space at Lake Basile to Town Council and Town Staff to do more investigation and report back to them. Ms. Peterson seconded the motion.

Ms. Glassman stated that if the Town feels that there is a public benefit by receiving this property, they will need to have a conversation with the bank regarding getting this property in the condition that would be acceptable.

The motion was unanimously approved.

5. Assess unfinished business of 2009 / Establish agenda for 2010

Ms. Glassman stated that there are several outstanding issues including open space; farming; the Triangle; update on open space inventory; request for Town funding for the Tulmeadow Woodland; the Open Space Fund; and the Ethel Walker property in the 6 year capital plan.

Mr. Loomis stated that the Committee will also need to discuss an organic farm policy proposal.

6. Adjourn

Ms. Peterson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:15 p.m. Mr. Gallagher seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

