

From: Susan Mazurski May 18, 2009 1:13:09 PM
Subject: Open Space Committee Minutes 03/04/2009 APPROVED
To: SimsburyCT_OpenMin
Cc:

MINUTES
OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting – March 4, 2009

1. Call to Order

Mary Glassman called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room at the Simsbury Town Hall. Committee members present were John Loomis, Margery Winters, Dunny Barney and Helen Peterson.

2. Public Audience

Diane Nash of the Tree Committee stated that they will be having a meeting next Wednesday. Although the Committee does not have any money and since they do not have a budget, they are looking for creative ways to get some good publicity. The Committee will hopefully be putting a “Tree Gossip” section into the local newspaper, with a caption that reads, “For more information, call the Tree Committee”.

Ms. Nash stated that they continue to work on their brochure, which has had many revisions. When they meet next Wednesday, they will be discussing this issue. They will also be discussing their Arbor Day plans.

Ms. Nash stated that having Tom Roy, a public works person, as the Town’s Tree Warden is a benefit. He feels that the Town’s trees are just as important as the buildings. She stated that he has been great when dealing with CL&P and their upcoming project on Hopmeadow Street.

3. Review / Adopt minutes of February 25, 2009 Special Meeting

Ms. Winters made a motion to review the February 25, 2009 minutes. Mr. Barney seconded the motion.

Several edits were made by Mr. Barney and Mr. Loomis. Because Mr. Loomis suggested an edit that Ms. Glassman was not comfortable with, it was asked that this section of the minutes be written verbatim.

Ms. Winters withdrew her motion. Mr. Barney withdrew his second to the motion.

Mr. Barney made a motion to table to February 25, 2009 minutes until the verbatim edits were made. Mr. Loomis seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

4. Meadowood Triangle Update

Ms. Glassman stated that, at a recent meeting, the Board of Selectmen did vote to send out RFPs for the Triangle; they also tabled any discussion regarding the fields. The Board of Selectmen endorsed the concept of the wildlife corridor and they authorized the Town to send out an RFP for just the Triangle property for farming. She stated that they will be notifying the farmers that were on the list, as well as other farmers who have expressed interest in using the Meadowood Triangle. Timing is of the essence; farmers want to start planting as soon as possible.

Ms. Glassman stated that Mr. Sawitzke is drafting the RFP; it is in the process of going out to the farmers. Mr. Barney stated that there is nothing on the RFP that deals with issues of non-performance. Ms. Glassman stated that this would be dealt with when entering into a contract.

Mr. Barney stated that there is information sought on fertilizer types and sources. He stated that Lime is not a fertilizer. He feels that this should be on the list. Ms. Glassman stated that she would mention this to Mr. Sawitzke to add to the list.

5. Review RFP for Town Farm

Ms. Peterson made a motion to go into Executive Session at 4:35 p.m. Ms. Winters seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Mr. Barney made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 5:15 p.m. Mr. Loomis seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

6. Recommendation for Town Farm

Ms. Glassman stated that this has been a long process. She thanked Bill Walsh and the Friends of Town Farm Dairy for being good stewards of this land. She feels that the Friends had a great concept, although unfortunately they experienced difficult circumstances that did not allow them to continue. She stated that the concept of community farming is exactly what the Friends were trying to do. If that had been successful for them, the Town would not be trying to figure out what to do with this land.

Ms. Glassman stated that a recommendation needs to go to the Board of

Selectmen as to what the Town should do with this land going forward.

Ms. Peterson made a motion that the Open Space Committee send forward a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen that the Town Farm, as we know it, be separated into two entities. The section of land to the southeast of the road be dedicated to the concept of community farming and that the Board of Selectmen take into consideration an opportunity to lease out the parcel with the buildings to the west of the roadway to an entity and give The Farmstead At Mine Brook who wishes to move their business to Simsbury to utilize this portion of the Town Farm.

Mr. Loomis suggested the following amendment: that this would be subject to certain due diligence and that the farm operation on the west side be agreeable to give adequate access for equipment storage and cooler access.

Ms. Winters questioned if something should be added regarding a timetable to review this within the next several years. Ms. Glassman stated that they could have the community farming group report back to this Committee at the next Open Space meeting. The Town would have to enter into a lease in order to lease out the land; the Town would need some timeframe by which the entity would lease the land. She stated that if this entity would like to retain a farmer, the Town would be open to leasing this land to the farmer. Ms. Glassman also stated that the Town is open to community farming and that they want this concept to work.

Ms. Peterson accepted the amendment by Mr. Loomis. Mr. Loomis seconded the motion.

Mr. Loomis stated that he is happy that the Town is moving forward with what has some long term viability. He stated that he has high hopes that this will work for the community.

Mr. Barney questioned if this arrangement has been discussed with Mr. Miller. Ms. Glassman stated that the Open Space Committee directed her to have conversations with Mr. Walsh, Mr. Miller and Ron Simmons. This same concept of working together to do both has been discussed with all three. She stated that everyone was comfortable with this.

Ms. Winters stated that if the Town finds another location for this community farm, that land may be open for negotiations. Mr. Loomis stated that this could be part of a discussion, although not part of the motion. Ms. Winters agreed.

Ms. Glassman stated that they are sending a strong message to say that the Town is committed to the concept of community farming and that they are anxious to get it started and to see it flourish.

Ms. Glassman stated that if the Board of Selectmen vote as this Committee did, this would mean that things will keep going forward. She stated that the Town will then start the background checks and all of the other things that are necessary. Ms. Glassman stated that she is hopeful that this concept can be up and running so they can get seeds in the ground this spring in order to show the community that this concept is real, although it will be starting small.

Ms. Peterson's amended motion was unanimously approved.

7. Other Business

The Committee discussed whether there is a need for athletic fields and whether there is a need to close a portion of Barndoor Hills Road. Mr. Sawitzke stated that this is only a thought; no decisions have been made. Ms. Peterson stated that there are residents who are concerned that fencing will be associated with these fields because fencing is usually necessary when fields are close to a road. Mr. Loomis stated that fencing was not being considered.

8. Adjourn

Mr. Barney made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:38 p.m. Ms. Winters seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.