

From: Susan Mazurski September 12, 2012 11:03:00 AM
Subject: Open Space Committee Minutes 05/02/2012 Special Meeting
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To: SimsburyCT_OpenMin
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Open Space Committee
Special Meeting - May 2, 2012 - 4:30 p.m.

First Selectman Mary Glassman called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m. In attendance were Zoning Commissioner Ed Pabich; Conservation Commissioner Margery Winters and Helen Peterson.

1. There was no public audience.
2. Ms. Winters moved to adopt the minutes of May 4, 2011 with the correction of her name to Margery. Mrs. Peterson seconded the motion. The minutes were adopted unanimously.
3. Mrs. Peterson moved to adopt the calendar for Fiscal Year 2012 to meet the first Wednesday of each month at 4:30 p.m.. Mr. Pabich seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.
4. Richard Sawitzke presented a summary of the Town's acquisition of open space from 1995 to 2012. Mr. Sawitzke said the list was very impressive - noting that 45 properties totaling 1,467 acres were acquired by either the Town, State or the Land Trust at a Town cost of \$18,521,000 and \$2,729,000 in grant funding. Mr. Sawitzke said if the Ethel Walker school open space purchase is passed at referendum on May 15th, it will bring the Town total to 32 percent of the Town preserved by open space. Mrs. Peterson questioned whether all of this land is designated as protected open space but Mr. Sawitzke said it was not. Mr. Pabich asked if there is a minimum acreage size for the Town to acquire open space. Mr. Sawitzke said there is no minimum acreage if it is contiguous to Town open space, it is often not in the Town's best interest to acquire parcels less than 10 acres.
5. The Board asked Mr. Sawitzke to report back with a list of any additional parcels recommended for purchase by the Town under the Plan of Development. The board also said they would like to explore a more robust maintenance plan for maintaining existing open space.
6. Mrs. Glassman reported that she has had conversations with Chuck Howard, President of the Simsbury Land Trust, expressing the Town's interest in collaborating on open space initiatives.
7. Ms. Winters indicated her interest in a more aggressive plan to deal with invasive species which can become a public health issue.

8. Mr. Sawitzke asked the Board if they would consider a motion to authorize the town to apply for a new round of state grant funding for the third phase of the Ethel Walker School purchase. Mrs. Peterson moved to recommend that the Town submit an application for state funding for Ethel Walker phase 3 purchase. Mrs. Winters seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

9. Parks and Recreation Director Gerry Toner presented the commission with a draft open space maintenance plan. Following Storm Alfred, Mr. Toner said the Town focused on public safety issues and then moved into aesthetic and open space cleaning issues. He said the Town has been inundated with requests to clean up open space areas especially those areas adjacent to residential neighborhoods.

10. Mr. Toner said the town is trying to be good neighbors but does not have the budget to be proactive in maintaining open space areas. Mr. Toner said the Town has also noticed an increase in illegal dumping. The commission discussed an interest in the forest management plan. Mr. Toner said he would contact the DEP to have them come out and look at some Town areas. He also suggested the Town explore the use of conservation easements rather than open space acquisition which would allow the preservation of open space without the Town having to incur the expense of annual maintenance.

11. Ms. Winters moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:45 p.m. Mrs. Peterson seconded the motion and the meeting was unanimously adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary A. Glassman, First Selectman