

From: Susan Mazurski October 12, 2009 9:32:46 AM
Subject: Open Space Committee Minutes 07/29/2009 APPROVED
To: SimsburyCT_OpenMin
Cc:

MINUTES
OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE
Special Meeting – July 29, 2009

1. Call to Order

Mary Glassman called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room at the Simsbury Town Hall. Committee members present were John Loomis and Dunny Barney.

2. Public Audience

Diane Nash of the Tree Committee stated that all of the members are volunteers; they are all very busy people. She stated that the tree arborist did a great job identifying the trees, which have been marked on a map. The problem is that the map is not in a format that can be given to Mr. Sawitzke. Ms. Nash has asked Tom Roy to look into getting what they have already prepared to Mr. Sawitzke.

Ms. Nash stated that the next Tree Committee will meet sometime in August to discuss what needs to get done.

Ms. Glassman stated that the Town was recently been notified regarding available grants. She will get an update for the Tree Committee in time for their next meeting. She stated that it is good to know what grants are available; the Committee could start a project tailored to a specific grant.

Ms. Nash stated that she is hopeful that the Charrette will tie in open space and the beautification of Schultz Park. It would be great if the trees and park could be done as part of the Center Plan and Charrette. Regarding Schultz Park, Ms. Glassman stated that the bandshell will have a massive tree cutting and pruning. Also, the structure at the bandshell is not used and it is in disrepair. She is excited to see the cleanup in this area. Ms. Glassman stated that Main Street Partnership is interested in an Art in the Park event at Schultz Park. This event would feature local artists.

Ms. Nash stated that the Tree Committee is involved with the 1820 House regarding the Hemlocks that are there. Those trees have already been treated. She stated that Jack Eno would also like to put up a plaque at the 1820 House, which he purchased many years ago. Ms. Glassman stated that the Town does not own the 1820 House, although the Town does own the land around the house.

Regarding the Fee in Lieu of Open Space regulation, Ms. Nash stated that the Planning Commission has this on their agenda for discussion. She feels that if a developer does not have to give open space to the Town and instead they can give a fee, then the Town will never see any more open space. She also feels that fees may get put into the general fund unless there is a mechanism in place so this does not happen.

Mr. Loomis stated that the Planning Commission has not seriously considered this issue. They will not have a serious discussion until after the Charrette process. He stated that the Commission members have received a proposal that is modeled after Avon's regulation. He stated that the Commission has not done any research on this issue and they have not yet had any meaningful dialogue.

Mr. Barney stated that the Open Space fund has not been used. He questioned if there was a problem in using this. Ms. Glassman stated that this could be used, although when funds come into the Town, the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance would have to put the money into that specific account.

3. Review/Adopt minutes of June 3, 2009

Several edits were made to the June 3, 2009 minutes.

Mr. Loomis made a motion to approve the June 3, 2009 minutes as amended. Mr. Barney seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

4. Town Farm Update

Ms. Glassman stated that the community farm lease has been approved by the Board of Selectmen. The lease was sent to the Town Attorney for his review and general approval. Mr. Barney stated that the Town Attorney has the changes that were made by the Board and that Ms. Glassman should be receiving a signable version very soon. Ms. Glassman stated that it would be signable pending the Attorney General's approval.

Ms. Glassman stated that painting and grass cutting is currently taking place. The demolition of the shed will be getting underway soon. A simple sign is being made, although it needs to go before the Design Review Board for approval.

Mr. Barney stated that they have agreed for a logo for the Community Farm of Simsbury, Inc. He stated that they have had two Board meetings. They have also interviewed two candidates for Executive Director. The position was offered to one of the applicants; they are waiting to hear back from the applicant.

Mr. Barney stated that the Community Farm of Simsbury, Inc. would like to have a fall opening event, although much work needs to be done prior to

that. He stated that they are hopeful that they will get a sublease for the farm.

5. Farm Policy Update

Regarding the Triangle, Ms. Glassman stated that the asbestos in the house is being removed. The Fire Department will be burning it as part of an exercise. Ms. Nash questioned if residents had been informed of this. Ms. Glassman stated that they have not, although she will discuss how and when they should be notified with the Board of Selectmen.

Ms. Glassman stated that there is concern regarding the structure of the tobacco barn. The Town has hired someone to decide the best way to stabilize the barn. She believes that it needs to be cabled in order to save it. The Town will be getting an estimate for this process; she does not expect this to be costly.

Mr. Barney questioned if there were any grants available for this type of work. Ms. Glassman stated that she has only seen DEP Forestry grants. She has not seen any farm type grants, although she will look into this.

Regarding the Griffin Land action, Mr. Loomis stated that the request was to extend the judgment date. They did modify the date once before to September 1, 2009. Griffin Land is now requesting the new date of April 30, 2010. The mylar will need to be filed 90 days from the April 30, 2010 date, although two extensions of 90 days could be granted. He stated that the Box Turtle needs to be protected during this work. Mr. Loomis stated that the Planning Commission made a motion not to oppose the new date requested.

Mr. Loomis stated that Griffin Land had to file with the DEP and Army Corp of Engineers because of the remediation of the pond. They have been held up by the Army Corp of Engineers. They cannot do anything until they get a response back from the Army Corp of Engineers.

Ms. Glassman distributed a memo regarding a policy on farming from Susan Masino to the Committee members. Mr. Peck also drafted a policy as well. His suggestion was to categorize the Town's land into different levels and require different applications.

Ms. Glassman stated that the Town is working toward a policy on farming land before they send out any RFP. She stated that she would like to discuss this with the Open Space Committee members with a decision at their September meeting. She stated that she is looking for guidance regarding this policy.

Mr. Barney questioned what the requirements of Organic Materials Research Institute (OMRI) would be.

Ms. Glassman questioned if the goal would be to have all Town owned land be certified organic or follow organic practices. Mr. Barney stated that he would not want to have any Town owned land that is not organic being farmed. The reason for this is the Town does not want to spend the enormous capital costs of having to run water lines.

Ms. Glassman stated that she will have Mr. Peck draft the policy for organic certified or organic practices. The Committee can continue to discuss this again at their next meeting. Mr. Barney suggested also having a mission statement attached to the policy. Ms. Glassman stated that the Town will write a formal policy.

Mr. Barney stated that the Parks and Recreation Department needs to look at their practices regarding the golf courses, fields, playgrounds, etc. Ms. Glassman stated that she would invite Mr. Toner to an upcoming Open Space meeting.

6. CIP Update

Ms. Glassman stated that the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education have reviewed the Capital Plan. They will be having a joint meeting to discuss this issue. She stated that they are trying to get the projects down to a 7% debt policy. This means that many projects need to be cut. Ms. Glassman distributed a memo from Kevin Kane, which states how much money the Town can spend per year over the next six years in order to fit within the policy.

Ms. Glassman stated that after several revisions, there is a new list for the 6-year capital plan. She stated that the bondable capital projects have been ranked and prioritized. Ms. Glassman stated that in May 2012, the Ethel Walker Phase II and in May 2014, the next phase of the Ethel Walker purchase comes in as well. These are still on the Capital plan.

7. Adjourn

Mr. Barney made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:00 p.m. Mr. Loomis seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.