

From: Susan Mazurski November 18, 2008 8:39:23 AM  
Subject: Open Space Committee Minutes 10/01/2008 FINAL  
To: SimsburyCT\_OpenMin  
Cc:

MINUTES  
OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE  
Regular Meeting – October 1, 2008

1. Call to Order

Mary Glassman called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m. in Main Meeting Room at the Simsbury Town Hall. Committee members present were John Loomis and Dunny Barney. Helen Peterson arrived at 4:45 p.m.

2. Public Audience

Anita Mielert stated that Jim Eamon, the House majority leader, has appointed her to the Face of Connecticut Steering Committee. She stated that she represents a spot that is reserved for someone who belongs to a local preservation organization. This Committee is comprised of groups that are interested in historic preservation, farmland preservation, open space preservation and brownfields mitigation. They are trying to form a coalition so the State of Connecticut approaches these issues in a balanced way.

Mr. Loomis stated that there is inadequate mapping of farmland soils at the State and Regional levels. Mr. Barney stated that, in terms of agricultural preservation, the State operates on specific applications, but regarding having tools available for Town, there are virtually none. He stated that when he was trying to get UCONN to do a study, he found that there was no knowledge regarding farming in Simsbury at the State level.

Mr. Loomis stated that assistance with barn renovation and restoration is virtually non-existent in Connecticut. Ms. Mielert stated that this is something she has lobbied for on the national level. She stated that their main goal is a much more significant level of funding and recognition by State government. Mr. Barney stated that Ethel Walker has been working on its barn complex. He questioned if there were any incentives to keep their historic barn in place. Ms. Mielert stated that they should contact the Connecticut Trust for Barn Preservation.

Ms. Glassman congratulated Ms. Mielert on her appointment. She offered her assistance in any way possible.

3. Approve Minutes from September 10, 2008 meeting

Mr. Barney made a motion to approve the September 10, 2008 minutes as written. Mr. Loomis seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

4. Introduction of Tree Committee members

Mary Glassman introduced some of the new members of the Tree Committee, including Diane Nash; John Schaefer, Landscaper; Bruce Powell, Senior Arborist; and Carol Clark-Flanagan, from Ethel Walker School. She stated that the other volunteers that could not be here today were Susan Prentice, Jane Hannah and Margery Winters.

Ms. Glassman thanked the volunteers for their service. She stated that the Open Space Committee would like to focus on trees, which have been ignored in Town. She stated that there is already a plan in the works to inoculate several Elms in Simsbury. The one in front of the Town Hall has been inoculated; they are currently trying to determine if it is appropriate to inoculate the tree in front of Eno now or in the spring. They have also identified a tree near the Boy Scout Hall. The Simsbury Methodist Church has also expressed interest in working with the Town to inoculate their tree. There is sufficient funding in place for this. Ms. Glassman stated that Rich Sawitzke will be at the next meeting with an update regarding this issue. Mr. Powell stated that there is still time for the tree in front of Eno to be inoculated.

Ms. Glassman stated that the first task of the Tree Committee could be to make sure the Elms in Town are properly taken care of. Ethel Walker School is also interested in providing students to help identify trees and to help do some mapping.

Mr. Peck distributed a memo that he wrote to Mary Glassman dated September 10, 2008. He stated that the Tree Committee could meet when specific issues arise and to tackle specific tasks. There are specific members on the Committee that are qualified to answer detailed questions that might come up from time to time. He recommended the following mission for the Tree Committee: "The Simsbury Tree Committee's mission is to encourage the Town to commit community resources and/or private resources toward preserving and improving our public trees, thereby enhancing Simsbury's historic character, esthetics, natural and economic environment by: a) Reforesting the public streets; b) Maintaining (not literally) the Town's forests; c) Raise and fund projects with both public and private funds; d) To identify and make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen, and to

provide information pertaining to planting sites and additions and repairs to the Town's sidewalk infrastructure; e) To educate the public about the various alternatives available pertaining to public tree plantings of the public streetscape; and f) Perform research on tree related issues, policies or specific matters as directed by the First Selectman. Mr. Peck stated that the members could refine or adopt this mission at this meeting or an upcoming meeting. Mr. Peck stated that the Tree Committee may also have requests from other Commissions that might need to be researched.

Mr. Loomis stated that the memo states there will be 3 to 5 members of the Tree Committee. He stated that there will be 5 to 7 members; this should be changed. He stated that a tree plan should also be included; it should be made known where the Town is going in the form of a plan. Mr. Barney stated that they could evaluate the trees in Simsbury in order to determine the needs to come up with a public tree planting plan.

Mr. Barney stated that the Tree Committee will serve as a sub-committee of the Open Space Committee and not the Board of Selectmen. He stated that they still need to determine who will staff this Committee and how demanding it will be on people's time. Ms. Glassman stated that it will be up to the members of the Tree Committee how they would like to start. They should start with something manageable, i.e. the Downtown area. Another suggestion was to get mapping started of the trees in a specific section of Town. Ms. Mielert suggested that the Tree Committee start with the Downtown and should discuss how to continue the streetscape. They might also try to see if they can find grant money, which might be key in completing this work.

Diane Nash stated that an adopt-a tree program has been discussed in the past. She has talked with several groups who are very interested in getting involved. Ms. Glassman stated that she has gotten several requests regarding donating trees for someone who has passed away. She stated that it would be great if these people could donate these trees to the Tree Committee or the Tree Committee could make suggestions regarding certain types of trees.

John Schaefer stated that the Tree Committee might want to start a process to look at the existing trees in Town that are stressed. He stated that there are 6-8 Maple trees near the high school that are stressed, possibly because of the impact of construction. Ms. Glassman stated that nothing is currently in place for this; they might want to think about bringing someone in annually to look at the trees in Town. Mr. Barney stated that this is only one reason why the Tree Committee is so important to Simsbury.

Carol Clark-Flanagan stated that Ethel Walker will be starting a program for students to map the trees in their woods and make brochures for walking

tours for different age groups. Ms. Glassman stated that this same concept might be done for the Downtown area.

Regarding how the Tree Committee might get started, Bruce Powell stated that GPS and mapping is a good way, although very expensive. He suggested that they make a list of priorities and then make a plan. He also suggested that they start in the Downtown area; there might be a lot of educational grants. Ms. Mielert stated that it is also important to work with the State DOT.

Mr. Barney made a motion to appoint Diane Nash, John Schaefer, Bruce Powell, Carol Clark-Flanagan, Margery Winters, Susan Prentice and Jane Hannah to the Tree Committee. Mr. Loomis seconded the motion.

Mr. Peck stated that Mike Hodges should be added to the motion. Although he was unable to come to the meeting today, he is interested in serving on the Tree Committee.

Mr. Barney amended his motion to include Mike Hodges. Mr. Loomis seconded the amended motion, which was unanimously approved.

Mr. Loomis made a motion to adopt Mr. Peck's memo dated September 10, 2008, with the following changes: 1.a.) This committee should be a temporary committee and have 8 members; and 2.d.) To identify and make recommendations to the Open Space Committee... Also to add the following: 2.g.) Create a tree plan; and 2.h.) Identify grant funds. Mr. Barney seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

## 5. Landscape Update

Ms. Glassman stated that Mr. Sawitzke does not have the large scale mapping available at this time.

## 6. RFP – Town Farm Dairy

Ms. Glassman stated that she is keeping in close contact with Friends of the Town Farm Dairy; there are many volunteers who would like to stay involved. She distributed community farming books for the Committee members to review; community farming was a suggestion made by Bill Walsh.

Ms. Glassman stated that the Town has drafted an RFP to get proposals on kinds of things that could go at Town Farm Dairy. She stated that the Board of Selectmen has already approved sending out the RFP, once it has been reviewed by Counsel. She stated that they would like to cast a wide net of how this land could be used and have people make a proposal. They would then share the proposals at a meeting and discuss the options and

decide what to do going forward. Mr. Barney stated that the RFP should also be sent to UCONN, Cornell and Pennsylvania.

Bill Walsh stated that he felt it was wise for the Town to send out the RFP in order to see their options, although he does not think an individual could use the farm. He stated that the size of this farm might be a limitation, although its size is similar to other farms in Connecticut. Ms. Glassman questioned if having housing on site was an incentive. Mr. Walsh agreed that it was a benefit.

Mr. Barney questioned how important it was for the farm to be organic. Mr. Walsh did not believe that being organic was crucial. He stated that the cost of transportation to get organic hay is a very big expense.

Ms. Glassman asked for a volunteer from the Open Space Committee to let local farmers know that the RFP would be going out shortly as a courtesy to them. Mr. Loomis stated that there is a list of 9 farms, which includes Town Farm Dairy, in the POCD.

Ms. Glassman stated that they are trying to get the group from Lands Sakes to come down to talk to this Committee about how their program works.

Ms. Glassman distributed a copy of Planning For Agriculture, a brochure that discusses planning a future for agriculture and understanding agriculture in Town. She stated that she would like to discuss this further at the next meeting.

#### 7. Meadowood Triangle – Update

Ms. Glassman stated that, under the contract, the Town had agreed to close by September 30, 2008. The Board of Selectmen extended the date to the end of October and Culbro also agreed to extend the closing to the first week in October. She stated that the stumbling block is that they are still trying to get an answer from the DEP as to how to close on the land without violating the requirements of the grant. She stated that Mr. Peck is in the process of finding an escrow agent.

Regarding cleaning the land, Mr. Peck stated that they received several complaints that there was trash on the property. He stated that Griffin Land assured the Town that everything would be cleaned up prior to the closing.

#### 8. Athletic Field Update

Ms. Glassman stated that the Parks & Recreation Commission will be holding a meeting this Thursday. She stated that she will get an update regarding

the usage and regarding the agricultural fields, so this Committee will be able to make some recommendations.

Ms. Glassman stated that Chuck Howard informed her that the Simsbury Land Trust is looking into a grant to purchase the woodlot on Tulmeadow Farm. It would be very helpful for their grant application to have a letter in support of purchasing that land.

Mr. Loomis made a motion to amend the agenda to add a discussion regarding the Simsbury Land Trust. Mr. Barney seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

9. Simsbury Land Trust

Mr. Barney made a motion to have a letter prepared for the Simsbury Land Trust indicating the Open Space Committee's support of the acquisition of the woodlot on Tulmeadow Farm. Mr. Loomis seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

10. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn at 5:22 p.m. was made by Mr. Barney. The motion was seconded by Mr. Loomis, which was unanimously approved.