

From: Susan Mazurski December 12, 2008 11:36:50 AM
Subject: Open Space Committee Minutes 11/05/2008 APPROVED
To: SimsburyCT_OpenMin
Cc:

MINUTES

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – November 5, 2008

1. Call to Order

Dunny Barney called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. in Main Meeting Room at the Simsbury Town Hall. Committee members present were John Loomis and Margery Winters.

2. Public Audience

Diane Nash stated that the Wild and Scenic Study Group will be making a presentation at the Ethel Walker School on November 13th at 7:00 p.m. She stated that the more people who attend and get educated, the easier it might be to get the designation, saying that each group was supported. She stated that people who live near the River are afraid that this designation will prohibit them from recreational activities along the River. She stated this is not true; it prevents the Federal Government from doing things such as putting in dams. Ms. Winters stated that the Wild and Scenic Study Group has sent letters to these waterfront homeowners regarding this study, trying to get them involved.

Ms. Winters stated that the study being done by the Wild and Scenic Study Group in no way precludes the Regulations; each Town has their own regulatory authority. There have been other studies done also. She stated that money has already been spent to study the regulations in Towns to see where the strengths and weaknesses are. Mr. Peck stated that he did review the regulation review that was done for Simsbury; he found this report to be lacking. Ms. Winters stated that this is an opportunity for the Town to get together and discuss what things need to be done to preserve the River. Mr. Barney stated that signs identifying the River are important, but lacking in Simsbury. He feels that signs will keep the River in people's minds as they go over the River. He questioned if informational signs could be placed on the Town bridges in Simsbury and possibly on the State bridges in Town.

3. Approve Minutes from October 1, 2008 meeting

John Loomis stated that in the October 1st meeting minutes, it stated that the tasks of the Tree Committee were discussed as well as tree planting plan. He questioned if this plan was in the process of being started. Mr. Peck stated that he will be discussing this issue under Item 5 of the

agenda.

Mr. Loomis made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 1, 2008 meeting as written. Mr. Barney seconded the motion, which was approved. Margery Winters abstained.

4. CCM Workshop of Release of "Planning for Agriculture: A Guide for Connecticut Municipalities" to be held on December 9, 2008 at the Simsbury Town Hall, Main Meeting Room, at 10:00 a.m.

Mr. Barney stated that there are 6-7 Towns involved with the Department of Agriculture, who will be holding a workshop on December 9th at the Simsbury Town Hall. He encouraged all of the members of the Open Space Committee to attend. He stated that they need to get the word out regarding this workshop for all who might want to attend. Mr. Peck stated that a letter will be going out to local farmers telling them about the workshop. It is also on the Town's website. Mr. Peck also suggested that the Hartford Courant do a write-up about this event.

5. Tree Committee Update – Dunny Barney

Mr. Peck suggested that the Tree Committee get together for a meeting to decide on specific tasks so they can refine their mission statement. He stated that throughout the State, other Tree Committees have started with the task of knowing what trees they have in their Town. He feels that a tree inventory would be a good place to start, along with identifying an area to start with. They will also need to identify the locations of the trees as well as their species, size and their condition.

Mr. Peck stated that he has been researching different software programs that are easy to use and that are adaptable, but will also be able to grow in the future with the Tree Committee. He stated that all of these software programs cost money, although he is trying to find the best one that is the least expensive. Mr. Peck stated that he will be looking for software that can be loaded into the GIS system. He is hopeful that he will be able to recommend a program by the next meeting. Money will definitely be an issue; grants would be very helpful. Identifying trees will take a great deal of time and effort.

Mr. Barney questioned if a software program was needed. He stated that a lot of this could be done on Google earth or through the internet.

Ms. Nash stated that she spoke with Tom Zetterstrom regarding identifying the trees in Simsbury. He is very knowledgeable about the process. She stated that he would be willing to come out to do a test run. Mr. Zetterstrom also gave Ms. Nash two names from the DEP to find out more information regarding grant money available for studies of this kind. Ms. Nash stated that she is still researching this. Mr. Peck stated that he

would continue to follow up on these grants.

Mr. Sawitzke stated that he also has some contacts at the Connecticut Parks and Forest and will follow up with them regarding available funding. Regarding identifying the trees in Town, he stated that the base mapping for Simsbury already shows many trees. He stated that he and Mr. Peck would be willing to identify the trees in Town. If more information is needed, i.e. the age of the trees, etc., they would need to hire someone for that part of it.

Mr. Barney stated his concerns regarding delegating the task of identifying the trees in Town to the staff. He would like to make sure this gets done in a timely fashion. He would like the plan to be done over the winter so when planting time comes, they can begin.

Mr. Barney questioned if the Elm trees have been inoculated yet. Mr. Sawitzke stated that they have had a first treatment, although their main treatment will be in the spring because the trees have to be in an uptake mode for moisture.

Mr. Barney stated that the Open Space Committee would like to appoint Diane Nash as the point person for the Tree Committee in order to get started. He asked that she schedule a meeting to discuss the mission statement and the project of identifying the trees from the Simsbury Bank down to the Congregational Church. This would be a 1.1 mile stretch. Ms. Nash stated that she would be willing to be the point person.

Mr. Barney stated that the critical issue is that many of the street trees are located in the DOT right-of-way. If they wanted to have a straight linear progression of trees down Main Street, which he feels would be best, they would need State approval to plant them. He stated that they should begin working with the State now to find out what the process is.

6. Meadowood Triangle - Update - Richard Sawitzke

Mr. Sawitzke stated that the Town is scheduled to close on all of the Meadowood property by the end of November. They will be applying the \$350,000 grant to the purchase of this property.

Mr. Loomis questioned if the Town would be receiving the additional grant in the amount of \$500,000. Mr. Sawitzke stated that he is not certain they would be receiving any additional money.

Mr. Loomis questioned when the Town should designate uses for this property. Mr. Sawitzke stated that the Town should wait on this.

Mr. Barney questioned when the plastic would be cleaned up from this property. Mr. Peck stated that it has already been cleaned up. They have also put down a Winter Rye. Mr. Barney questioned if the Winter Rye was put down on the other side of the street as well. He urged Mr. Peck to find out if this was done.

Regarding agricultural purposes for this property, Mr. Loomis stated that if there is to be a 2009 operation on this property, or a portion of it, the Town should indicate this. Mr. Sawitzke stated that the RFPs for Town Farm Dairy are due on November 14th. He stated that they will probably not want to make any decisions until they see the RFPs. He stated that one of the issues for Town Farm Dairy is that there have not been enough hay fields to support operations; this may play into the decision. Mr. Barney stated that they are also still waiting for the report on the review of athletic fields in Town.

Mr. Loomis stated that he does not want to go into 2009 without a clear expectation of an outcome for this land. He asked Mr. Peck to outline the steps and a timeline for this.

Mr. Sawitzke stated that there are important issues regarding the Meadowood Triangle. He stated that the Parks and Recreation Department needs to get the athletic fields report in by December. He also feels that Town Farm Dairy is an important component because if they will be having cattle operations, they do not have enough land. Mr. Barney stated that, at the last meeting, it was reported that Town Farm Dairy did have enough land available from other land owners for hay.

Because of timing, Mr. Loomis stated that he feels that the Town has almost lost the opportunity to have someone like Gary Cirullo use this land, who would like to use some of this property for educational purposes.

Mr. Barney would like Mary Glassman to be prepared to address this issue at the next meeting. By that time, the RFPs will have been received, which he would like circulated to the Open Space Committee members to review. He stated that there may be a need to have 2 meetings in December because of the timing of these issues.

7. New York Times Article

The Open Space Committee members received an article entitled, "A Locally Grown Diet With Fuss But No Muss" from the New York Times. Mr. Barney stated that there is currently a huge demand for locally grown foods.

8. Acceptance of Donation of Reifenheiser Parcel – Part of Munnisunk Subdivision

Mr. Peck stated that the Planning Commission has made a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen to accept this 7 acre parcel as open space. This is an undeveloped parcel that fits in with the POCD.

Mr. Sawitzke stated this parcel is located in the Munnisunk stream belt corridor. He stated that this property also links to other open space within McLean.

Mr. Barney stated that one of the missions of the Open Space Committee is to accept parcels donated to the Town. He stated that the acceptance of this donation has already been completed. He questioned where the Open Space Committee fits into this process.

Mr. Loomis stated that the Planning Commission's role regarding this issue was Statutory.

9. Town Farm Dairy Update: RFP due date November 14, 2008
- Discussion of Review of Proposals

Mr. Barney stated that he would like the Open Space Committee to be notified and have the RFPs made available for them to review on November 14th.

Mr. Barney stated that Mary Glassman would like to take a trip to Land's Sake in Weston, Massachusetts. The Open Space Committee, Chuck Howard of the Simsbury Land Trust, as well as others, are invited to come on the trip. The following are potential dates for the trip: November 21, 25, and December 5, 9, 12, 16, 19. He asked that the Open Space members e-mail Ms. Glassman with their availability.

Mr. Barney stated that the operation at Land's Sake is 30 years old. They do all of the land maintenance for their Land Trust, the Town. They also have educational programs, a Town Farm Dairy, a forestry program and ecological programs.

Mr. Peck stated that he was just informed that the Natural Resource and Conservation Service will not be offering WIPP grants to non-agricultural lands as well as State, county or local government owned land anymore. The WIPP program was for eradicating invasive plants.

Mr. Peck distributed information for the Committee's review regarding other communities that have Agricultural Commissions.

10. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn at 5:30 p.m. was made by Ms. Winters. The motion was seconded by Mr. Loomis, which was unanimously approved.

