

**CALL TO ORDER**

First Selectman Lisa Heavner called the regular meeting of the Open Space Committee to order at 4:30 PM on Wednesday, October 7, 2015. The meeting was held in the main meeting room of the Simsbury Town Offices located at 933 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT. In attendance were the following committee members: Ferg Jansen, Helen Peterson and Don Rieger. Staff included Gerard Toner, Director of Culture, Parks and Recreation; Town Engineer Jeff Shea and Town Attorney Robert DeCrescenzo.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC AUDIENCE**

No one spoke at public audience.

**REVIEW/ADOPT MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 2, 2015**

Line 75 was changed from “Ms. Heaver” to “Ms. Heavner.”

**EAGLE SCOUT PRESENTATION -- ETHEL WALKER WOODS PROJECT**

Justin Bush of Troop 175 presented his proposed Eagle Scout Project to install multiple trail signs and re-blaze trails on the Ethel Walker Woods property. The property has had some trail blazing performed but many of the blazes are worn and faded. Bush would also make wayfinding signs. Both will give users confidence as to what trail he or she is on and how they interconnect. He said he thought he would install 6 to 8 signs. He would use the consultant’s report and the consultant as a guide, as well as consulting with Gerry Toner, director of parks and recreation.

There was discussion on color and types of blazes or possibly revising the color scheme or adding maps. Bush told the commissioners he hopes to get the posts in before the winter.

There was discussion on next steps, the approval process and the deadline for the Scout’s project, which is in March.

Mr. Rieger moved that the project be approved, contingent on working closely with the appropriate town staff and consultant. It was seconded by Ms. Peterson and passed unanimously. It was noted that the project approval is subject to approval by the Boy Scouts.

**DISCUSS CHAPTER 21, FUND FOR LAND AND PRESERVATION ORDINANCE AND OPEN SPACE STEWARDSHIP POLICY**

Mr. DeCrescenzo said what he gave the committee members was basically a template to a revision to the ordinance with the minimal requirements needed to address disposition of open space added. There are criteria for other issues as well, and the committee can make revisions.

He cautioned the committee from making the ordinance too prescriptive, as there are many different types of open space. He said the policy can be more prescriptive.

There was discussion on what boards and commission should look at the revised policy and ordinance, and the approval process for the changes.

Mr. Jansen suggested added that a site walk be included in the policy for any parcel being considered for disposition.

Mr. Rieger noted there are some parcels that cannot be walked.

Mr. Jansen suggested adding the guideline of a site walk where possible.

Ms. Peterson said she has heard from people who are concerned with differentiating between active and inactive activity in relations to various open space parcels in town. She said there is concern that open space set aside for preservation may become a field, for example. She wanted to be careful with the wording.

Mr. Toner said it was more likely that a piece of property would have a hiking trail added then become an athletic field.

It was also noted that language in relation to stewardship of open space was a critical piece of the policy.

Ms. Heavner said the policy should state strongly that nothing will be considered for disposition unless it is in the town interest for public safety or as part of a larger plan to acquire a better piece of open space. The open space committee has consistently said it is hesitant to sell open space and it is not likely unless there is a great public interest that is being served. But in that case, there needs to be a policy/ordinance.

The committee will look at another draft of the policy and ordinance in November.

**OPEN SPACE INVENTORY UPDATE**

Mr. Toner said there was not much to report. The inventory work that the intern started over the summer is still continuing. There is some signage work that will need to be done and he is looking into working with volunteer groups.

**1 OLD BRIDGE ROAD UPDATE**

Jason Williams lead landscape architect at Milone & MacBroom was there to meet the committee, as he will be preparing a few designs for 1 Old Bridge Road. He discussed a bit of his background and experience working on projects with water features.

It was stressed that Mr. Williams would use the consensus document that was prepared by the town and work in conjunction with the flower bridge group and others with an interest, such as the Farmington River Watershed Association.

Mr. Williams may be able to make a presentation in November or December.

**ADJOURN**

Mr. Jansen moved to adjourn and Ms. Peterson seconded and all voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Stephanie Riefe