



# Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

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## OPEN SPACE STEWARDSHIP AND POLICES WORK GROUP

July 6, 2022

4:30 P.M.

**Virtual Meeting Only**

### REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Call to Order

1. Minutes from April 6, 2022 Meeting
2. Meeting Format (Virtual or In-Person)
3. Open Space Website Updates and Opportunities
  - Topical Information Sheets
  - Recommendation Lists (*Parcels Best For...*)
  - Other

Adjournment

**Open Space Stewardship & Policies Work Group**

**Wednesday, April 6, 2022**

**4:30 PM- Via Zoom Video Conference**

**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT**

**PRESENT:** Margery Winters and Susan Masino

**ALSO PRESENT:** Tom Tyburski, Director of Culture, Parks and Recreation, was also in attendance.

**Call to Order**

Ms. Winters called the meeting to order at 4:32 PM

**1. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the February 28, 2022 Open Space subcommittee workgroup meeting were accepted.

**2. Discussion on Open Space Rangers Program**

Ms. Masino stated that she thinks they are ready to bring this item to the full committee. Mr. Tyburski shared that on 4/23 there will be a town wide clean-up day from 10-12. They are using the C.P.R. website to sign people up for a section of road/park.

Ms. Winters discussed the nip the knotweed program where three times a year for three years it gets chipped down, bagged and solarized. She stated it would be a good opportunity for volunteers. It would need to be done around Memorial Day and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and before August 20<sup>th</sup>. She stated that this would be another opportunity for getting public involvement. Ms. Masino stated this relates to the email regarding possible grant funding to deal with invasives and that funding could potentially cover a project coordinator. She suggested getting this grant application approved at the next full committee meeting. Mr. Tyburski stated that he can get the word out regarding it if someone can do the back-end portion of things.

**3. Discussion on Using an Intern to Make Open Space Website Updates**

Mr. Tyburski stated he spoke with IT today and got access to the Open Space website and learned how to add and change things, it is very outdated. Ms. Masino stated she went through the website and made a PowerPoint to suggest how to make these website changes.

**4. Discussion on Ag Lease RFP Update**

Mr. Tyburski stated that they did get some proposals back from the RFP. The farmer who had been leasing the six tobacco barns on the back of Meadowood is going to re-up for five years. The farmer who had previously been leasing the 86 acres along Hoskins Road has also requested to re-up. There is also a proposal to lease the small parcel on Barn Door Hills Road by Mr. Antonio.

**5. Communication from Audubon Society**

Ms. Winters stated there is great interest by Hartford Audubon regarding the birds, identifying areas, possible trails and how the land is going to be used at Meadowood. Mr. Tyburski commented that in the future he does think there should be a subcommittee to do some brainstorming to see what it is going to look like whether it's a trail, farm, etc., how does the Town want to use it. There are the 24 acres and there's nothing in the capital plan that's funding any projects out there. He stated that he met with Mr. Beach and he is interested in putting a kestrel falcon box out there, they are also interested in doing some bluebird houses. They also hope to come up with a long-term mowing plan. Ms. Winters agreed that a committee should be set up as they are getting questions from the public.

Ms. Winters stated she would be sending the workgroup the policy from Newtown on native plantings.

## **ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Heather Taylor  
Committee Clerk

## **Basic Strategy for Topical Information**

1. Develop simple information - mix of policy and/or public education
2. Develop list of topics: native plants, birds and pollinators, forests, lighting, bears, mowing, water, encroachment/dumping, backyard climate solutions, health and well-being? etc.
3. Use a VERY simple “template format” similar to CTLCV briefing papers, found here: [https://www.ctlcv.org/uploads/6/2/0/1/6201942/ctlcv\\_100\\_2021.pdf](https://www.ctlcv.org/uploads/6/2/0/1/6201942/ctlcv_100_2021.pdf)

## **Things we need to do/decide:**

1. Decide on process and if/who/when for each topic? Send documents for sharing through town staff or attach to agenda. **Can we use google docs?** – could make link open to all and editable by WG members – for example here: [https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/127mXj9\\_MTcKAjSCAAC92a00iRrAcu5pk](https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/127mXj9_MTcKAjSCAAC92a00iRrAcu5pk)
2. See if we have anything in place already on the topic? If so incorporate and/or link to it (i.e. encroachment/dumping policy?) Surf around for best practice. Seek review as possible.
3. Consider adding or linking to Landlines articles on open space site?

As relevant topical sheets could be linked / cross posted and cross-refer to other fact sheets and policies. Suggest VERY simple sections, adapted as needed - for example:

## **Principles and Problems**

## **Fast Facts**

## **Recommendations and Solutions**

Additional Reading (optional)

## **Sample topic:**

Draft content below under expert review, partly adapted from International Dark-Sky Association ([darksky.org](https://darksky.org)) and its Massachusetts chapter (<https://idamass.wordpress.com>). Also note HB5289 from 2022: [https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/CGABillStatus/cgabillstatus.asp?selBillType=Bill&bill\\_num=HB5289](https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/CGABillStatus/cgabillstatus.asp?selBillType=Bill&bill_num=HB5289)

# Dim the Lights! Light Pollution and Life on Earth

## Principles and Problems:

Life on earth evolved with daily rhythms of light/dark. Light pollution has negative effects on our health and the ecology that sustains us. Some wavelengths are particularly damaging, and using the “**least light**” and the “**best light**” saves money and helps all species.

Energy-efficient light-emitting diode (LED) lights risk making the problem worse. Quickly. LED lights use less energy but can produce more light and harmful light. Clear guidance is needed for homeowners and municipalities. Optimal choices are fiscally responsible and protect the environment.

In addition to people, species most sensitive to nighttime lighting are birds, insects and amphibians. These species are declining and need our support (i.e. reduced mowing and responsible maintenance, natural area stewardship, wetland and farmland policies, pollinator pathways).

In sum, nighttime lighting has negative effects. Using less energy is a win-win that saves money and the climate. Updated policies and comprehensive public education are needed to prevent and limit unintentional and harmful effects of excessive lighting.

## Fast Facts

Light pollution problems for human health include: driving, sleep, immune, cognition, psychiatry, etc.

Light pollution problems for other species include: disrupted navigation, foraging, mating, migration

Light pollution is most serious 1) near wetlands or dark natural areas, 2) if exterior lighting is brighter than much brighter than the surrounding lightscape, or 3) when lights are not shielded or point skyward.

Dark skies and responsible, efficient lighting are supported by (TBD) FRWA, SLT, Audubon, Keep the Woods, Pollinator Pathway, McLean?, others? Home Grown National Park? Garden Club and related??

## Recommendations and Solutions – *Dim the Lights!*

Always use the **least light** and the **best light**.

**Least light** means *the lowest lumens* and *the smallest number of lights* used *as needed*.

**Best light** means a correlated color temperature (CCT) of *no higher than 3000K*, shown to be *least disruptive to human health and to wildlife*.

**Homeowners** should use shielded outside lights with low lumens on a motion sensor (motion-sensitive lights are more effective at deterring snooping – i.e. criminals, bears) or a timer. Excessive lighting can be reduced by simply replacing the bulb or coating the current bulb.

**Towns** should install shielded lighting < 3000k where needed and use it as necessary. If bright lighting has already been installed, add shielding, timing or change bulbs as possible. Adding timers, motion sensors, and/or taking every-other-one off-line will dramatically increase the lifespan of the installation.

## **Other ideas . . . .**

### **Simsbury Open Space At-a-Glance**

Hiking and Nature Study

Recreation

Land

Water

Farmland

Toolkit for Homegrown National Parks

### **Host a Home-Grown National Park**

Clean Water

Pollinators

Invasive plants

Dark skies

Natural Stewardship

Peaceful Coexistence with Wildlife

Other . . .