

**Open Space Stewardship & Policies Work Group**  
**Monday, November 30, 2020**  
**11:00 AM- Via Zoom Video Conference**  
**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT**

**PRESENT:** Margery Winters and Susan Masino

**ALSO PRESENT:** Tom Tyburski, Director of Culture, Parks and Recreation and Zoning Compliance Officer, Tom Hazel, were also in attendance.

**Call to Order**

Ms. Winters called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM

**1. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the October 27, 2020 Open Space workgroup meeting were accepted.

**2. Model Agriculture RFP and Lease**

The Wallingford and Manchester sample RFPs were discussed. Ms. Winters stated that the Manchester RFP seemed pretty straightforward but did seem like a lot of writing for the farmers. The form includes name, address, type of agricultural operation, capacity and experience to manage agricultural property, past experience and improvements made on other town properties, name of property looking to lease, intended use of property and how it fits the leaser's business plan, the stewardship plan for property, and how the property would be used to benefit the citizens of Simsbury.

Ms. Winters inquired as to how this compares to what Simsbury has now. Mr. Hazel stated he looked at a couple RFPs from 2012 and they appeared complicated. Mr. Tyburski stated that perhaps there should be some guidelines about machinery or what kind of hours of operations there might be if it's in a neighborhood. Mr. Tyburski commented additional items that could be included in the summary of the proposal could include what type of crops the town wants to see or would a farm stand be allowed on the property. Ms. Winters stated that there was a list of what the Town wanted to see in the appendix. Mr. Tyburski stated that on the sample RFP form there should be an area that states the property that they want to lease, for x amount of years for x amount of dollars. Mr. Tyburski stated that this submittal form with the bid form is what the committee would use to evaluate the different bids.

Ms. Winters stated that she liked the idea that Wallingford and Manchester had the USDA and NRCS come through and evaluate the property and give suggestions for conservation practices on a particular property of farmland. Ms. Masino stated that to get the RFP done perhaps that is a little too detailed but maybe there should be something in the cover sheet or appendix to say that our intention is to get advice about timing about these things and we want to protect wetland resources and we expect you to respect those guidelines, etc.

Ms. Winters stated that they do have language in both the Wallingford and Manchester RFP about conservation practices. Next year, Open Space might want to call NRCS to look at our properties.

Mr. Hazel stated that with an overview of what the town's intentions are, it gives the leasee a parameter of what we are looking for for good stewardship while they lease it.

Mr. Tyburski stated that lines should be added next to each item under “type of agricultural operation experience”.

Ms. Masino commented that maybe there should be a line that asks “is there any other information that you feel is important”.

Mr. Tyburski stated that he will email the workgroup the bid form that should be attached to the RFP. Mr. Tyburski stated he would insert it into page three and have the applicant’s signature and date at the bottom of it.

Ms. Winters will merge the document with the agricultural land use agreement (as an appendix) and will send it to the subcommittee for changes/suggestions ahead of Wednesday’s meeting. Ms. Winters will see what she can do with the lease but assumes it will have to be looked at by the Town lawyer.

**3. Criteria for Acquisition of Open Space**

Ms. Winters asked if there was any changes the work group wanted to make to the 14 point list that they had previously put together. Ms. Masino stated that she only noticed a typo that needed to be fixed.

**4. Sustainable CT Grant for Ecological Trail/Pollinator Show Case Garden**

Ms. Masino stated that she has corresponded with the principal at Tootin’ Hills about replacing a blue bird box and putting in an information sign with a QR code, however she has yet to cost those items out or apply for the grant.

**5. Discussion of December 2020 Meeting/2021 Meeting Schedule**

Ms. Masino stated that she thought the work group meetings were going to be scheduled as needed.

Mr. Tyburski stated he sent the work group members the bid form, which can be used because it’s fairly generic.

Ms. Winters asked if there was a list of the town’s farmland properties. Mr. Hazel stated he is working on that with Mr. Shea.

**ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 11:26 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Heather Taylor  
Committee Clerk