

**Open Space Committee  
Wednesday, April 7, 2021  
4:30PM- Via Zoom Video Conference  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT**

**PRESENT:** Margery Winters, Susan Masino, Kelley Kearney, Tim Walczak, and Bill Rice, Helen Peterson, Dave Bush

**ALSO PRESENT:** Maria Capriola, Town Manager, Tom Tyburski, Director of Culture, Parks and Recreation, Tom Fitzgerald, Management Specialist, Mike Glidden, Planning Director, and Zoning Compliance Officer, Tom Hazel, were also in attendance.

**Absent:** Anne Erickson

**Call to Order**

Ms. Winters called the meeting to order at 4:33 PM

**1. Public Audience**

Ms. Masino announced that the Grange has received a matching grant from Sustainable CT to fund farmer apprentices this summer. She also shared that the Grange is giving away free seeds.

Mr. Wellman proposed adding a discussion on the Meadowood project as the first agenda item. Ms. Peterson made a motion to add an update on the Meadowood project as item number one on the agenda. Mr. Rice seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor.

**2.) Meadowood Project Discussion**

Mr. Wellman shared that at the Board of Finance public hearing, the Board of Finance did not forward the Meadowood project to referendum in May. He stated that the Board of Finance had about a dozen people participate in person and another 160 plus in letters with the vast majority being in support.

Mr. Rice asked if the Board of Finance chose not to put Meadowood forward to referendum if that means that the monies will not be appropriated. Mr. Wellman stated that the next option would be a signature campaign, if enough signatures are gathered there would be a town meeting where a motion could be made to send this item to referendum and then there could be a vote.

Ms. Peterson asked if the Board of Selectmen has flexibility to move the referendum date out so there would be enough time for people to sign the petition. Mr. Wellman stated that the latest they are able to schedule the referendum is May 7th.

Ms. Capriola stated that the first step is the signature collection, the signatures then have to be certified by the Town Clerk, the Board of Selectmen would then schedule a special town meeting and legal notices would have to be posted for that. It is most likely that event would need to be held outdoors due to Covid.

Ms. Masino shared that the Grange president is very supportive of the vote on this and this land. They will hold open hours for signature collection between 12-5 on Saturday and Sunday. They contacted a notary and will have drive-by signing and will also have an open house at the Grange.

Ms. Capriola discussed the status of the funding scenarios for the Meadowood acquisition. The Town's contribution, which would be pending referendum, is about 2.4 million.

Mr. Bush inquired if they would lose any Trust for Public Lands funding because they missed a particular deadline. Ms. Capriola stated that the big deadline they are up against is the contract to purchase, there was a 12 month contract to purchase and then that could potentially be extended out an additional six months so basically 18 months to complete the transaction. She stated that if the signatures are in fact obtained for the special town meeting and referendum then they will need to be pretty aggressive in order to meet that contract deadline. The six month extension is through the end of July of this coming year.

Ms. Capriola stated that the petition wording will be reviewed by the Town's attorney and and Town Clerk.

Mr. Bush asked if the Town can play any role in the collection of signatures. Ms. Capriola shared that she believes if any individual wants to take part in collecting signatures that is fine as long as they are doing it on their own behalf and not as part of a committee or the Town. She will speak with the Town's attorney regarding a legal opinion on what's an appropriate role for an individual collecting signatures.

Ms. Capriola discussed a summary of sample larger scale open space purchases. The past acquisitions were shown adjusted for present value. She shared that the Town's funds towards the purchase price are about 40%. The overall cost per acre is just under \$21K and the Town's cost per acre is about \$8,400.

Ms. Masino shared that the Trust for Public Land doesn't get involved in a project unless they think it has extremely high value conservation and value to the public and the grants they are applying for are incredibly competitive. She stated that 3.5 million is being given to the Town due to the importance of this project.

### **3.) Approval of Minutes**

Ms. Peterson made a motion to accept the minutes of February 3, 2021 with the amendment that she was present. Ms. Winters seconded the motion. The Committee members voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 3, 2021 meeting as amended.

Ms. Peterson asked if there was any objection to tabling the Draft Acquisition Criteria Policy until the next meeting. Ms. Winters made a motion that the Draft Acquisition Criteria Policy be tabled to the next meeting. Ms. Peterson seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

### **4.) Policies/Policies Work Group Update**

#### **a. Model Agricultural Lease RFP**

No update provided.

#### **b. Agricultural Land Use Policy**

No update provided.

#### **c. Draft Acquisition Criteria Policy**

Tabled until next meeting.

**5.) Other**

No items were discussed.

**6.) Executive Session per CGS §1-200(6)(D): Discussion of potential purchase of Meadowood property.**

Ms. Masino made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to CGS §1-200(6)(E), at 5:14 p.m. and to included Maria Capriola, Town Manager, Tom Tyburski, Director of Culture, Parks and Recreation, Mike Glidden, Planning Director, and Zoning Compliance Officer, Tom Hazel as well as the Open Space Committee members.

**ADJOURN**

Ms. Winters made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Peterson. All voted in favor. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 5:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Heather Taylor  
Committee Clerk