

**Open Space Committee**  
**Wednesday, May 5, 2021**  
**4:30PM- Via Zoom Video Conference**  
**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT**

**PRESENT:** Eric Wellman, Margery Winters, Susan Masino, Kelly Kearney, and Helen Peterson.

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

**Call to Order**

Mr. Wellman called the meeting to order at 4:33 PM

**1.) Public Audience**

No public audience.

**2.) Approval of Minutes**

The Committee members voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2021 meeting.

**3.) Meadowood Update (Oral Report)**

Mr. Wellman reported that the Meadowood acquisition passed at referendum and he recognized Ms. Masino for her advocacy. Ms. Winters stated that she did receive an email from H. Lawler stating they are close to the finish but still have to raise 200K. Ms. Masino shared that the Grange has ordered a cake and they will be having a party Saturday afternoon

**4.) Policies Work Group Update**

**• Model Agricultural Lease and RFP**

Ms. Winters stated that there was nothing new to report and that they needed to have a workgroup meeting due to technical difficulties at the last meeting.

**• Draft Acquisition Criteria Policy**

Mr. Hazel reported that in the purpose preamble, the mission is “to promote social interactions, healthy living, environmental preservation and environmental education while meeting the recreational needs of residents of Simsbury.” Also, because passive recreation was listed pretty straightforward, details regarding ‘active’ recreation was added stating “such as ball fields, playgrounds, hard surface courts, tracks, swimming pools and other more intensive uses.” Mr. Hazel reiterated the fact that since this is town property, they do have the final oversight on what is allowed and what is not. The wording “in no particular order “ was also added to the last paragraph along with the bullet point “provide sites for active recreation.” Ms. Masino

stated that she would like one more meeting to be able to go through the document before it is given to the Board of Selectmen.

**5.) Open Space Acquisition Fund/Open Space Funding**

Mr. Wellman asked if Ms. Peterson wanted to share on this item since she requested it be added to the agenda. Ms. Peterson asked if the item could be deferred as she would like the time to put something into writing rather than just open up a conversation.

Mr. Kearney asked if there has ever been a discussion regarding the 18 acre parcel for sale by the river and whether it would be a potential acquisition candidate for open space. Mr. Hazel stated he believes there are a lot of restrictions on property in that area between FEMA floodplain and wetland issues. Mr. Kearney stated that he feels the committee should at least discuss it before it gets more apartments or something else on that spot just to see what the options are, if any. Mr. Hazel stated his department could provide information on what it's been zoned for and what its potential is and then the committee can discuss it further.

Ms. Winters asked what the process would be if the committee identified a property that they thought would be good for open space acquisition. Mr. Wellman stated that he can only speak to Meadowood as that is the only one he has been a part of. He stated that it started with a series of conversations in executive session and then it turned into a presentation to the Board of Selectmen where it became public and the process proceeded from there. Mr. Wellman stated that his understanding is the Trust for Public Land approached the town about the acquisition. Ms. Masino stated it may be the parcel at 34 Hop Meadow that Mr. Kearney is inquiring about. Ms. Masino shared that as part of the Open Space master plan they asked the consultant to identify connections (habitat or recreation). Ms. Winters stated that once they identify the open space acquisition criteria then perhaps the next step would be taking a map and identifying and having the context right.

In reference to the meadow at Ethel Walker Woods, Ms. Masino wanted to make sure there was no special permission needed if they wanted to reclaim that and jump horses there. She shared that there has been a regional effort to pull together these little nature preserve areas and there has been some confusion on the language about the Wagner Meadow as it seems to suggest that the whole thing could be turned into a meadow at any time. Ms. Masino stated that it is not changing anything about their intent so she would like to work with Mr. Hazel to look at that language and make a minor change. She stated she thinks it was in the October packet to the Board of Selectmen.

**ADJOURN**

Ms. Peterson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Masino. All voted in favor. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 5:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Heather Taylor  
Committee Clerk