

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

**PRESENT:** Eric Wellman, Margery Winters, Susan Masino, Helen Peterson

**ALSO PRESENT:** Tom Tyburski, Director of Culture, Parks and Recreation, Tom Fitzgerald, Management Specialist, and Mike Glidden, Planning Director.

**Absent:** Anne Erickson, Tim Walczak, Kelly Kearney, Bill Rice

**Call to Order**

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

**1. Public Audience**

No public audience.

**2. Approval of Minutes, May 5, 2021**

The Committee members voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the May 5, 2021 meeting.

**3. Meadowood Update**

Mr. Glidden reported that the acquisition is in the final stages and that on July 13<sup>th</sup> the Planning Commission will be holding a public hearing for the re-subdivision of the Riverbend development. He stated that the various funding sources are requiring they actually have to divvy up some of the property based on whether it's DEEP, Department of Agriculture, etc. On July 15<sup>th</sup>, there will be a special Board of Selectmen meeting to have a public hearing regarding the release of the existing conservation easements.

Mr. Wellman stated they don't anticipate any significant public comment, however, these are procedural steps.

**4. Draft Revisions to Natural Stewardship Policy**

Mr. Wellman stated if the small changes to the policy are accepted it would then be sent to the Board of Selectmen. The first change would be adding Meadowood explicitly to the policy as an area that would fall under it. Wegner Meadow was also deleted. Ms. Masino asked if the Meadowood 140 acres that referenced in policy is the current kind of natural area that's the corridor and it's not the grassland farmland area. Mr. Glidden stated that is correct, that will be the area that's subject to DEEP funding not the Department of Agriculture, which is to the southeast of the development. Ms. Masino asked if there is DEEP funding that is specific to grassland birds or is it just for open space natural land in general. Mr. Glidden stated that the funding was just specific to open space, it wasn't specific with grassland bird preservation.

Ms. Winters made a motion to forward the proposed changes to the Natural Area Stewardship Policy as presented to the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Masino seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor.

Ms. Masino made a Motion to add a discussion item to the agenda about potential logging by DEEP in the great pond area. Ms. Winters seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor. Mr. Wellman shared that the town got a letter from DEEP about their intention to do a few things in the Great Pond area; 1) to remove some of the trees/logs that were already down, 2) to take down some trees that they had deemed to be unhealthy and 3) logging an area that was about 1.2 acres of white pine (under the deed the intention is for logging). Mr. Wellman said that based on previous conversations, he knows the community has been concerned about the unnecessary cutting down of trees. Ms. Masino commented that she was thinking about sending a simple note to DEEP from the Open Space Committee of the Town of Simsbury citing that they recently adopted Natural Area Stewardship (and provide a copy) asking that they apply this type of policy to a specific and suitable subset of the Great Pond block.

Ms. Peterson asked if the state is required to inform local community about the work, the scope and when it is going to take place. Mr. Glidden stated that they provide a notification to the town, they normally try to provide a good understanding of the scope but because the state is exempt from local regulations they don't have to tell them everything. Mr. Wellman stated there was a site visit between DEEP and some members of the staff and then there's going to be a public information session at the site on July 15<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Masino made a motion effective July 7, 2021 to endorse the letter on behalf of the Open Space Committee to send to DEEP forestry. Ms. Winters seconded the motion. The motion passed all in favor.

## **5. Housekeeping: Meeting Format (in-person, hybrid, remote)**

Mr. Wellman questioned what the Committee wanted the meeting format to be moving forward. He stated that the Town invested in technology known as an Owl, which allows for a hybrid approach. After further discussion, a hybrid approach was decided as best.

Ms. Peterson asked if there was any additional information about the 18 acre parcel by the river that discussed at the last meeting. Mr. Glidden stated that there is a master plan that calls for the development of that parcel and the owner is seeking to develop property there and that there is little environmental value.

## **ADJOURN**

Ms. Winters made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Peterson. All voted in favor. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 4:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Heather Taylor  
Committee Clerk