

Open Space Committee
Wednesday, September 2, 2020
4:30PM- Via Zoom Video Conference
REGUALR MEETING MINUTES - Adopted

PRESENT: Eric Wellman, Margery Winters, Susan Masino, Helen Peterson, David Bush, Bill Rice

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

Absent: Anne Erickson, Tim Walczak

Call to Order

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

1.) Public Audience

No public audience.

2.) Approval of Minutes

Ms. Peterson commented to the fact that “commission” and “committee” are used simultaneously in the minutes. The minutes will be reflected to show “committee” instead of “commission”. The Commission members voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the July 1, 2020 and July 17, 2020 meetings as presented.

3.) Updates (Oral Reports)

Parks and Open Space Master Plan – Mr. Tyburski reported that additional comments were submitted following the joint meeting in July to Sampson & Biggs, and he received a revised document on Friday. The anticipated presentation to the Board of Selectmen is October 26th.

Status of Potential Disposition of Holcomb Street Parcel– Ms. Capriola reported that the BOS held a second public hearing in August on the matter, about 10-15 comments were received at the second public hearing. The comments of the second hearing were more so in favor of the disposition. Ms. Masino clarified that those in favor at the second hearing were signed onto a common letter, whereas at the first public hearing there were many opposed. At the first hearing there were two letters in favor but one common letter with many signatures against the disposition as well as a couple dozen individual letters that were also not in favor of the disposition.

The Board of Selectmen did not take action at that meeting and are processing all the information heard. The topic will be on the September agenda. Ms. Masino stated that she is not in favor of this for a few reasons but did appreciate the additional information provided at the second meeting. Ms. Peterson also shared the sentiments that it is not the appropriate thing to do for the Town.

Pollinator Pathway Program Possible Grants– Ms. Masino shared that Sustainable CT has a grant matching program. Ms. Masino stated that the projects can be up to 30K and they now have a new energy one that can be up to 50K. You have to raise half of what your goal is and you have to get 20 different donors to contribute to make sure there is community support and involvement for the project.

4.) Policies/Policies Work Group

- a. **Natural Stewardship Policy** – Ms. Masino shared a document she pulled together as a simple overview of what would be the approach and philosophy for a natural area that doesn't need intervention. The goal of the document is to provide basic information and answers to frequently asked questions on Natural Area Stewardship. Currently, less than 5% of Southern New England is under Natural Stewardship and only a small fraction is legally protected as such. The benefits of Natural Area Stewardship were discussed. Ms. Masino shared that it may be useful to consider this a living document and that it was reviewed by several public policy people and ecologists.

Ms. Winters stated that she thinks the document is fantastic and is above and beyond what the Town has for management plans.

Ms. Peterson inquired if the document could actively be incorporated into the tools needed for the Committee.

Mr. Bush stated that the term “natural area stewardship” is used and it says that “any and all part of any forest”, he questioned if the committee envisions identifying the parcels in Town that might be coming with this umbrella. Ms. Masino stated that Belden would definitely be a natural opportunity for this. She would suggest that based on the new information about the Eastern Wild Way, Onion Mountain would be a place for this, or at least part of it along with Ethel Walker Woods. Ms. Masino also stated that the document is flexible.

Mr. Bush stated that before we adopt the toolbox, we need to know what tools are going into the toolbox. He also stated that since the plan will be a living document, he would like to at least have a parameter of what properties generally fit in it.

Ms. Masino agreed with Mr. Bush stating that, it cannot assumed to be the controlling document, it would be something that would specifically be applied to certain properties that we feel it fits and she would suggest initially to just pick the low-hanging fruit and then maybe pick some more as we go along. She would see this working in conjunction with the updated agricultural lease.

Mr. Wellman recommended to complete the work as soon as possible at the subcommittee level and then share the document in the next Open Space packet so the

87 public will have the opportunity to provide any input and then it can be discussed
88 before adopting as a group.

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90 Ms. Capriola stated that the Town's graduate intern would help organize the
91 subcommittee meeting and then gather the feedback for the subcommittee.

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93 **b. Disposition of Open Space Policy**

94 **c. Other**

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96 Ms. Masino shared that after the project started at Massacoe people contacted them that this is an
97 error that the core forest Ethel Walker Woods and this connector is not on the Eastern Wildway,
98 although it was just published in 2019. They have now fixed the error and we are now officially on the
99 Wildway. They are still doing their citizens science work Friday mornings at 9a.m at 150 Nimrod Road.

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101 Ms. Masino shared that the 350 Committee is creating a medallion, an artist in MA helped design it. She
102 shared the design with the Committee. The goal is to have them sold online and available for pickup at
103 the outdoor movie at Simsbury Meadows on September 12.

104
105 **ADJOURN**

106 Ms. Winters made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Bush. All voted in favor. Motion
107 passed. Meeting adjourned at 5:25 pm.

108
109 Respectfully submitted,

110 Heather Taylor

111 Committee Clerk