

From: Susan Mazurski November 8, 2010 9:34:26 AM
Subject: Open Space Committee Minutes 11/03/2010 DRAFT
To: SimsburyCT_OpenMin
Cc:

DRAFT
MINUTES
OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE
November 3, 2010

1. Call to Order

Mary Glassman called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room at the Simsbury Town Hall. Committee members present were Helen Peterson and Jim Gallagher.

2. Public Audience

Diane Nash asked that the Tree Committee have some sort of arrangement so that the Committee can be more structured. She suggested that the Open Space Committee talk to the Tree Committee members in order to tell them what it is they need to do. Ms. Glassman stated that she would be happy to support the Tree Committee any way she can.

Ms. Glassman stated that the Town did not make the Tree Committee a formal Committee so that they did not have all the Town requirements, i.e. minutes and agendas. She believed that this group of volunteers who wanted to study and make trees a priority; they would find their mission and they could decide what kind of group they wanted to be. She stated that she would be happy to provide some guidance for the Tree Committee. Ms. Nash stated that this would be helpful.

Ms. Nash stated that the Tree Committee may need funding for the identification of the trees along Hopmeadow Street. Ms. Glassman stated that the Tree Committee can work independently but work closely with the Open Space Committee. When funding is needed, this Committee can endorse it and send it to the Board of Selectmen. She stated that the Tree Committee can state what their budget will be. This Committee can then identify funds now or if there are funds that are anticipated for the next fiscal year, they can include this in their budget.

Ms. Nash stated that if the Tree Committee was officially a subcommittee of

the Open Space committee, this would help them recruit people. She stated that it would also be helpful if this Committee indicated that the preservation and maintenance of trees are important to the Town. Ms. Glassman stated that this will be placed on the next agenda. She asked that the Tree Committee write a letter to this Committee telling them who they would like to appoint on the Tree Committee. Ms. Nash asked that the Open Space Committee send a letter for the Tree Committee to respond to.

3. Review/Adopt minutes of previous meetings

Several edits were made to the minutes.

Ms. Peterson made a motion to approve the September 1, 2010 minutes as amended. Mr. Gallagher seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

4. Review of Iron Horse Boulevard maps

Ms. Peterson stated that she was asked by the Town Planner that the reviewing of the Iron Horse Boulevard maps be brought to the Open Space Committee for discussion.

Ms. Glassman laid out a map in front of the Committee that went back to January 2009, which was an ongoing process by the Economic Development Commission. The EDC wanted to do a build out analysis of what Iron Horse Boulevard could look like in the future, although this was never pursued.

Mr. Sawitzke stated that there are a lot of activities that take place on Iron Horse Boulevard. These activities bring a great deal of revenue to Simsbury. At one point, the lacrosse clubs were interested in having more fields down in this area, although that is not the case anymore. Mr. Sawitzke stated that there are a lot of concepts incorporated into this plan that deserve some examination, including a trail network; activities related to the Performing Arts Center; as well as others.

Ms. Glassman stated that since this map was provided, there have been several changes; the proposal for the fields is gone, although the proposal for the dog park was added. The dog park has already been approved by the Zoning Commission.

Ms. Peterson stated that the legends on the map are not consistent. She questioned if there is a document that goes along with this map. Mr. Sawitzke stated that there is a detailed document that goes with the map; this is an area of varying uses and non-uses that have changed. Ms. Glassman suggested that after this Committee gets the full report, Mr. Sawitzke can come back and do a full presentation. She also asked that Mr. Sawitzke make clear on the map of what currently exists as well as label

the leased agricultural land.

Ms. Peterson stated that the Open Space Committee will be reviewing the maps of Iron Horse Boulevard in order to make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Sawitzke suggested that the Open Space Committee wait to see the outcome of the Performing Arts Committee's needs study. Ms. Peterson stated that it will need to be established why the parking spaces are needed so they can have that as part of the Open Space Committee's recommendation. Mr. Sawitzke stated that there is no new parking being proposed; the current parking is used for the Performing Arts Center.

In response to a question by Mr. Gallagher regarding maintenance, Mr. Sawitzke stated that the current fields on Iron Horse Boulevard are maintained by the Parks Department. The back fields are only mowed once a year; the grass turf parking is maintained by Public Works and the Parks Department.

5. Request from Griffin Land regarding restrictions on Meadowood Triangle

Ms. Glassman stated that a letter from Griffin Land was distributed to the Committee members. Griffin Land has approached the Town asking if they can further restrict parcel D2 of Meadowood. The Town brought the land from Griffin Land with certain restrictions on it; they have now sent a letter stating that they would like to further restrict a portion of the Meadowood Triangle so that the Town can only use that land for habitat for grassland birds. She stated that because they understand that these additional restrictions will burden the Town, they are offering to give the Town \$78,000 toward the further restrictions.

Mr. Sawitzke stated that the parcel that Griffin Land would like to further restrict is 27.7 acres. If the Town accepts these restrictions, it would limit the use of certain types of agriculture. He stated that the DEP reviewed Griffin Land's project and they made the determination that some grassland habitat had to be preserved. Griffin Land offered this parcel for that purpose, although they did not own it at the time. He stated that he does not believe this proposal would be good for the Town.

Ms. Glassman stated that Griffin Land has several options in order for the DEP to approve their development, including restricting the land that the Town owns. The Town has several options, including: the Town can agree to this proposal; Griffin Land can buy the land back from the Town in order to restrict it; or in order to restrict this land, the restrictions on the Triangle can be released.

Ms. Glassman stated that although the Board of Selectmen has received this letter from Griffin Land, they have not had any discussions. She stated that she is looking at what the sense of the Open Space Committee is as well as for guidance.

Ms. Peterson questioned how the public would give their input regarding the option of Griffin Land buying back this land. Ms. Glassman stated that hearings would need to be held; a referendum would not be needed.

Ms. Glassman stated that if the Town does not approve this proposal from Griffin Land, their loss will be fifteen lots in their proposed development. Mr. Sawitzke stated that the Town is being offered \$78,000, which is between restricted and not restricted land; it is not the value of the fifteen developable lots.

Ms. Glassman stated that she would be willing to consider the restrictions. She believes that the residents would like less use of that land rather than more use of that land. She stated that she would be willing to entertain an offer for additional restrictions with fairer compensation; a fair number that could be forgiven on future purchase payments.

The Open Space Committee agreed to recommend to the Board of Selectmen that the Town consider entertaining the additional restrictions at a reasonable compensation figure, which would be reduced from the future purchase price.

6. Report on Open Space grants to Town

Ms. Glassman stated that the Town received \$450,000 applied to Ethel Walker School; the Land Trust received \$500,000 applied to the Tullmeadow Woods. Mr. Sawitzke stated that the Highland Grant was also approved; the State has agreed to merge it with the Town's grant.

7. Discussion of maintenance of Town Open Space land

Ms. Glassman stated that this Committee discussed the maintaining of open space at the last meeting. Mr. Roy stated that identifying areas that the Town no longer wants to maintain should be the next step. Ms. Glassman stated that this land could be quick claimed with conservation restrictions to homeowner associations.

8. Update on Town Dog Park

There was no report.

9. Establish meeting calendar for 2011

Ms. Peterson stated that Ms. Winters does have a problem getting to meetings on Wednesdays. Ms. Glassman stated that she would contact Ms. Winters prior to the Committee voting on the 2011 calendar.

This item was tabled until the next meeting.

10. Adjourn

Ms. Peterson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:20 p.m. Mr. Gallagher seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.