

**OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – JANUARY 6, 2016**

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CALL TO ORDER

First Selectman Lisa Heavner called the regular meeting of the Open Space Committee to order at 4:34 PM on Wednesday, January 6, 2016. The meeting was held in the main meeting room of the Simsbury Town Offices located at 933 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT. In attendance were the following committee members: Don Rieger; William Rice; new member Dave Ryan, Chairman of the Zoning Commission; and Helen Peterson. Staff included Gerard Toner, Director of Culture, Parks and Recreation; Town Engineer Jeff Shea; Assistant Town Planner Michael Glidden and Town Attorney Bob DeCrescenzo.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

No one spoke at public audience.

REVIEW/ADOPT MINUTES OF DECEMBER 2, 2015

The motion was made to adopt the minutes by Mr. Rice with the correct spelling of “November” on Line 15, as noted by Mr. Rice. Mr. Rieger seconded and all voted in favor, the motion passed.

ETHEL WALKER WOODS PROJECT UPDATE

There was no update.

DISCUSS CHAPTER 21, FUND FOR LAND AND PRESERVATION ORDINANCE AND OPEN SPACE STEWARDSHIP POLICY

Mr. DeCrescenzo explained this is a new section to the existing ordinance, as the current ordinance does not have a process for disposition of open space. There was some discussion on legislative functions and jurisdiction. If approved, this would be the process the board of selectmen would follow before any disposition of land the town owns that is “designated as open space.”

Mr. Rieger suggested adding a section ‘E’ under No. 3 of the ordinance to read as follows: “Any easement or other right or interest retained or otherwise acquired by the town in connection with a disposal under the Section shall itself thereafter be treated for purposes of this Section as an interest in real estate designated as open space.”

Mr. Rieger also suggested adding the word “release” to (a) after the word “assign” in the top portion of the ordinance.

Motion: Mr. Rieger moved to adopt the draft ordinance with the two changes. Mr. Ryan seconded and all voted in favor, the motion passed. The draft ordinance will now go to the board of selectmen for consideration.

OPEN SPACE INVENTORY UPDATE

There was some discussion on whether or not the inventory would help identify parcel that may be suitable for disposition, but it was determined that there needed to be more information on parcels to make that determination. Mr. Rieger said there were some parcels in the inventory that would be on a short list of those to consider, as they have no desired attributes. But nothing has been vetted fully and there is not enough staff at this time to take on this task. Mr. Toner said there was no compelling reason to get rid of any parcels at this point.

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The idea of disposition as a means to acquire an even better piece of open space was discussed. Ms. Peterson said the town has grown more sophisticated in its pursuit of open space and thinking of the quality of land, but must still remember the public's trust in the town as guardians of open space. There was a question from Mr. Ryan about the possibility of creating a wetland with some of the land. Mr. Rieger said "only God can make a wetland." Mr. Rice also noted that the subdivision regulations allow for some of these actions, not in terms of creating a wetland, but land swaps.

1 OLD BRIDGE ROAD UPDATE

Jason Williams, a landscape architect, and Suzanne Shore, a landscape designer, both from Milone & MacBroom, Inc. were in attendance. Mr. Williams gave a broad brush presentation with ideas for the property, focusing on two designs. This was only a discussion; no action was going to be taken. Mr. Williams described various places for parking, pavement or pavers, the flower bridge shed, a bike path, landscaping, picnic tables, a pavilion and river access, among other topics. Two women from the flower bridge group were there to add to the discussion.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Rieger asked about the top end Helen's Way off of Iron Horse Boulevard. There were some changes to it as the result of a police investigation. Mr. Rieger suggested maybe \$1,000 worth of planting could fill it in and help get ahead of the invasive plants that were removed. Ms. Heavner asked Mr. Toner to add that to his budget.

ADJOURN

Mr. Rieger moved to adjourn and Ms. Peterson seconded and all voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephanie Riefe