

**OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – MARCH 2, 2016**

Page | 1

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectman Lisa Heavner called the regular meeting of the Open Space Committee to order at 4:32 PM on Wednesday, March 2, 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, and Helen Peterson. Staff included Gerard Toner, Director of Culture, Parks and Recreation; Town Engineer Jeff Shea; and Assistant Town Planner Michael Glidden.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

No one spoke at public audience.

REVIEW/ADOPT MINUTES OF JANUARY 6, 2016

No changes were made to the minutes.

PROPOSED GAS PIPELINE – PENWOOD STATE PARK

Energy infrastructure company, Kinder Morgan, is proposing to add an additional gas pipeline adjacent to its existing line that runs through Penwood State Park. The proposal is before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Mr. Glidden said his research of the available submission documents shows that the proposed pipeline is in Bloomfield. He said there is nothing in the official application online that shows any activities in the Town of Simsbury, including the construction easement and modification of their easement.

There was some discussion on the possibility that an alternate easement was being proposed, but nothing suggesting where it may be located.

Simsbury Land Trust Trustee Sally Rieger said there is no official Simsbury route as far as they are aware, but that the Wintonbury Land Trust in Bloomfield sent an email to the Simsbury Land Trust stating there is a group of Bloomfield citizens who have suggested the proposed pipeline should be rerouted so it should run along the right-of-way out of Bloomfield and into Simsbury.

Ms. Heavner said both Simsbury and Bloomfield don't want the pipeline for similar reasons. She said if the town discovers the pipeline is being proposed in Simsbury, the town would reject that proposition. She said keeping the pipeline along the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) right-of-way is preferred.

Ms. Rieger stressed that the land trust was against the line running through the newly-acquired Tanager Hill property or the Mortimer property. The group was not opposed to the MDC route. The desire would be that the pipeline should stay on the other side of ridge line, staying away from the important and environmentally significant wetlands and uplands of that particularly valuable area. She listed different species that use the area as a migration route, or a habitat, and important watercourses in the area. People use the area for walking, and cross country skiing.

Mr. Rieger said he was not surprising Mr. Glidden didn't find documentation as the comment period closed in October 2015 so it's a quiet period where FERC is thinking about what it wants to do.

It was suggested that a letter be written to oppose any placement of the pipeline in Simsbury. But Mr. Glidden was asked to first find out from the company's public outreach person if an alternative is on the table and if so, can the town see the plans. If Simsbury is on the table, then the town can react. Ms. Heavner said she can write a letter, if needed, and get it co-signed by the Simsbury Land Trust and the Farmington River Watershed Association.

OPEN SPACE INVENTORY UPDATE

Ms. Heavner updated the committee that the Chapter 21, Fund for Land and Preservation Ordinance was passed unanimously by the Simsbury Board of Selectmen.

A change to the ordinance was any net proceeds of distribution "should" be added versus "shall" to the open space fund.

The committee then talked about the Open Space Stewardship Policy they have been working on. A policy is a working document that is used for guidance.

MOTION Mr. Rieger moved to adopt the Open Space Stewardship Policy. Ms. Peterson seconded. And all voted in favor, the motion passed.

Mr. Rieger said there was a change to the open space inventory itself; he added the classification of "scenic."

MOTION Mr. Rieger moved to accept the Inventory of Town Owned Open Space: A Work-In-Progress, Working Draft as of Year End 2015. Mr. Rice seconded and all voted in favor, the motion passed.

It was noted that the inventory would be added to the open space committee's homepage on the town website.

Mr. Rieger brought up the issue of the town initiating the sale of open space and suggested adding a policy for that. He read a statement he had written.

"Because the town code provision setting forth the process for considering proposals for disposition of parcels of town-owned open space charges the Open Space Committee with responsibility for evaluating any such proposal and making a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen, it is the Open Space Committee's view that it would be inappropriate for the Committee to *initiate* any such proposal lest its required evaluation be tainted with the appearance of predisposition.

"It should be for others to raise such proposals to the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Selectmen to determine whether to initiate the process set forth in the town code.

"In accordance with its Open Space Stewardship Policy, the Open Space Committee has made an effort at classifying the many town-owned open space parcels according to the roles they serve and the burdens of their maintenance. That classification is published as the *Inventory of*

**OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – MARCH 2, 2016**

Page | 3

Town Owned Open Space, A Work-in-Progress. The Open Space Committee hopes that resource, which is available on the town web site, will be helpful to others in assessing open space policy."

Mr. Rice asked if the committee would be in a unique position to recommend an open space piece that might be sold before someone else brought the idea to them. Mr. Rieger said he thought Mr. Rice was giving the inventory too much credit in terms of its analysis.

MOTION Mr. Rieger made the motion to amend the Open Space Stewardship Policy to incorporate at the end the addition of the language above. Ms. Peterson seconded and all voted in favor, the motion passed.

1 OLD BRIDGE ROAD UPDATE

Mr. Shea said the town has not heard from FEMA yet, but is still in the mix. Ms. Heavner asked that the suggestion the road be moved be taken off the table as there is no funding for such a proposal. She asked that Mr. Shea run through the checklist with the architect and meet with the flower bridge people as the concept is refined. There was some discussion on budgeting as the project moved forward.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Rieger asked about the re-vegetation of Helen's Way off of Iron Horse Boulevard, which saw some clear cutting. Several possible options were mentioned for that area, and other open space parcels that need stewardship.

ADJOURN

Mr. Rieger moved to adjourn and Ms. Peterson seconded and all voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 5:27 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephanie Riefe