

**CALL TO ORDER**

First Selectwoman Lisa Heavner called the regular meeting of the Open Space Committee to order at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 5, 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: Helen Peterson, Donald Rieger, and David Ryan. Staff included Gerard Toner, Director of Culture, Parks and Recreation. Also present were Dave Chase and Judy and John Schaefer.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC AUDIENCE**

Dave Chase of 39 Woodhaven Blvd. read an email letter from Susan Masino of 4 Madison Lane regarding stewardship of forests

**REVIEW/ADOPT MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 7, 2016**

Ms. Peterson made a motion to approve the minutes with the word “town” added before the word “agricultural” in line 30. Mr. Rieger seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**FOREST MANAGEMENT – ERIC HANSEN**

Eric Hansen, a partner with Ferrucci and Walicki LLC of Middlefield. He holds a degree in Forest Management. Mr. Hansen has worked for five years with Foresters for the Birds and Audubon which focuses on forests and bird habitat. Mr. Hansen discussed forest management in general with Committee and management of Onion Mountain Park.

Mr. Hansen discussed how inventoried current natural resources in the areas of Onion Mountain, Belden Forest, Ethel Walker and Stratton. He made maps and made recommendations to meet the goals that were reviewed by Conservation including sound sustainable stewardship (which includes invasive management), recreation and other areas outlined in his report. His focus was to evaluate and support the health of the trees and augment size, age and diversity of the forest.

Members asked about species and Mr. Hansen noted that he recorded the species he observed. He also accessed Connecticut’s Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDDB) for additional information.

Mr. Hansen confirmed that the primary goals of his efforts were not to “make money” for the Town or himself. In fact, Mr. Hansen does not get paid based on trees cut. His primary interest, as contracted with the Town, is to best preserve the health of the forest, including diversity of species, habitat, invasive management and the other goals approved by the Conservation Commission. As the forester on the project, his role is making sure the logger follows the plan in the most responsible manner for the forest. Before any work is done, Mr. Hansen notifies neighbors and offers to do walks with residents to explain the plan and answer questions or concerns.

46 Ms. Peterson asked who Mr. Hansen would recommend for additional education for the Committee.  
47 Mr. Hansen recommended Professor Tom Worthley at the University of Connecticut or Larry Russo who  
48 is a State employed forester. Mr. Hansen indicated he would email Gerry Toner with contact  
49 information.

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52 **TRAIL CONNECTION TO ONION MOUNTAIN PARK**

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54 Gerry Toner indicated that trail clean- up was underway and that Canton was working on its trails that  
55 will eventually connect with Simsbury's.

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57 **ADJOURN:**

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59 Mr. Rieger made a motion to adjourn at 6:08 p.m. The motion was seconded by Ms. Peterson. The  
60 motion passed unanimously.

61  
62 Respectfully submitted,  
63 Lisa L. Heavner

## Heavner Lisa

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**From:** Masino, Susan A. <Susan.Masino@trincoll.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 05, 2016 4:15 PM  
**To:** Heavner Lisa; Cooke Thomas  
**Subject:** Open Space meeting

Lisa -

I am SO sorry I cannot make it today's meeting; at the last minute I rounded up a few KTW people to go.

Dave Chase may read my comments into the record if he receives them in time but I wanted to send them to you also. I am cc-ing Tom Cooke.

Sincerely,

Susan

Open space Committee October 2016

From Susan Masino

41 Madison Lane

Thank you for bringing Mr. Hansen for a presentation and information session and I truly regret that I cannot attend. I did read his plan for Onion Mountain carefully and confirmed with many sources that Mr. Hansen is a very reputable forester.

I do not know exactly what Mr. Hansen was contracted to do, but I do think that Simsbury should pull together the best local resources (many are free and on line) so that when we hire someone to evaluate our open space forests they have the most detailed local information. As I noted at the Open Space meeting a few months ago in recent years I have had long conversations with several land owners with specific expertise who bought land and now have their land under "sustainable management" One graduated from Yale School of Forestry, one is an environmental engineer, and one is a well-known local environmentalist. All have very similar forested properties but very different plans - including one planning to do nothing. All are stewarding their land for future generations in their family. I consider this similar to the Town - we are stewarding the open space and forests in this town for the current and future residents.

Simsbury's resources and biodiversity are far beyond our neighboring towns. Caring for these resources is an area where we can be a real leader. Our efforts should align with our Town's reasons for conserving these forests, which were - and are - biodiversity, recreation, and water resources. This is not something that will be costly - it will likely be free. The information is there.

Members of Keep the Woods are willing to compile information and help the town with these efforts. I am not sure where these projects stand, or what the plan is for the Ethel Walker Woods in particular, but I will share one quote from Jay Kaplan at Roaring Brook regarding the Ethel Walker Woods:

"Well, I hope they don't disturb x, y and z because that is what makes those woods so special."

Thank you for your efforts and consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan Masino