

Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

## OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE Wednesday, November 6, 2019 4:30 P.M. Main Meeting Room, Town Hall, 933 Hopmeadow Street

## **REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

## Call to Order

- 1. Public Audience
- 2. Minutes of March 6, 2019 Meeting

## 3. Housekeeping Items:

- Selection of Chair for November 2019 through October 2020
- Selection of Vice Chair for November 2019 through October 2020
- 2020 Regular Meeting Schedule
- 4. Updates (Oral Reports)
  - Parks and Open Space Master Plan
  - Stewardship, Policies and Land Management Work Group
- 5. Discussion about Pollinator Pathway
- 6. Open Space Encroachment

Adjourn

1	Open Space Commission
2	Wednesday, March 6, 2019
3	4:30PM- Simsbury Town Hall- Main Meeting Room
4	REGUALR MEETING - DRAFT
5	
6	PRESENT: Eric Wellman, Helen Peterson, Susan Masino, Margery Winters, Timothy Walczak, Bruce
7	Elliott (on behalf of Dave Ryan), David Bush, William Rice
8	
9	ALSO PRESENT: Maria Capriola Town Manager, Tom Tyburski Director of Culture, Parks and Recreation
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11	Absent: David Ryan
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13	Call to Order
14	Mr. Wellman called the meeting to order at 4:31PM
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16	1.) Public Audience
17	Mr. Wellman asked if there were any members of the Public who wished to speak.
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19 20	Diane Nash spoke against HB5254, a bill that proposes to allow communities to fund open space
20	acquisition and stewardship through a real estate conveyance tax. Ms. Nash warned commission
21	members that this tax would turn residents against supporting open space acquisition and management.
22 23	2) Approval of Macting Minutas from 1/2/2010
25 24	2.) Approval of Meeting Minutes from 1/2/2019 Ms. Winters suggested changing a spalling error in the word "heach" in line 08 to "Beach" referring to
24 25	Ms. Winters suggested changing a spelling error in the word "beach" in line 98 to "Beech" referring to the type of trees in Belden Forest.
26	the type of trees in belder i ofest.
27	Ms. Peterson suggested that line 23 of the minutes does not accurately reflect Ms. Mielert's comments
28	in Public Audience at the January Meeting. Ms. Peterson said that Ms. Mielert's comment concerning
29	the disposition of open space parcels would have a negative effect on open space efforts in town.
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31	The Commission members voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the January 2019 meeting.
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33	3.) Discussion Regarding the Open Space Committee's Role in Open Space Stewardship
34	Mr. Wellman asked commission members to indicate whether they are interested in this commission
35	having oversight of Open Space stewardship in Town.
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37	Ms. Peterson supports the Open Space Commission having stewardship duties. She said the public
38	comes to this commission with Open Space issues, not the Conservation Commission where this
39	authority currently resides. She also mentioned that the Open Space Commission is made of
40	representatives of different land use boards and this gives this group a unique perspective on issues.
41	

42 43	Ms. Winters said it would be wise for the Open Space Commission to come up with suggested goals and policies for Open Space stewardship to then refer to the Conservation Commission. She agreed that this
43 44	group's diverse land use representation would be a benefit in developing stewardship policies and
45	procedures.
46	
47	Mr. Bush agreed with Ms. Winters, the Open Space Commission would likely produce more practical
48	policies due to the variety of stakeholders represented on the commission.
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50	Ms. Masino echoed Mr. Bush's and Ms. Winters sentiments.
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52	Mr. Wellman asked Town Manager Capriola if staff saw value in one commission having oversight of
53	Open Space stewardship, rather than splitting out parts of too different groups. Ms. Capriola noted this
54	commission's broad representation as ideal reason why she would feel comfortable with stewardship of
55	Open Space being placed with the Open Space Commission. She also let the group know that the Board
56	of Selectmen would have to officially delegate this responsibility to the Open Space Commission.
57	
58	Mr. Rice questioned whether their needed to be language in the Open Space Commission's request to
59	the Board of Selectman regarding the Forest Commission. Ms. Capriola will confer with the Town's
60	attorney regard this issue.
61	
62	Motion: Mr. Bush made a motion that Open Space Commission recommends to the Board of Selectman
63	that the Open Space Commission manage stewardship of open space. Ms. Winters seconded the
64	motion and it was unanimously approved.
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66	4.) HB5254 – An Act Establishing a Pilot Program Authorizing Municipalities to Impose a
67	Buyer's Conveyance Fee on Real Property to Fund the Purchase and Stewardship of Open
68	Space.
69	Mr. Wellman introduced discussion on HB5254 by letting the group know that this Board of Selectman is
70	interested in learning more about this, he asked the Open Space Commissioners for their perspectives.
71	
72	Ms. Winters stated that although Simsbury may never put the fee into practice, it may be wise to get the
73	Town's name on the bill now so we have options later. She said showing the Town's interest in this
74	topic could generate positive discussion on the Town's stewardship policies.
75	
76	Ms. Masino mentioned that she believed the Town had previously set up an Open Space acquisition and
77	stewardship funding mechanism but that it had never been funded.
78	
79	Ms. Peterson suggested advocating to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance that Open Space
80 81	Stewardship should be funded annually. Ms. Peterson also asked Ms. Capriola what HB5254 would mean for funding for the Town. Ms. Capriola shared the conveyance fee would be not be assessed on
82	the first \$150,000 of the property sale. She provided an example that on a sale price of \$315,000 (the

83 median sales price in Simsbury) the proposed Open Space Conveyance Fee would be 1% of the amount 84 over \$150,000, in this example \$1,650. 85 86 Ms. Peterson noted that the Town must first understand and develop our stewardship philosophy and then decide how to fund and follow through with stewardship management plans. 87 88 89 Mr. Bush questioned why HB5254 included stewardship in its title but the language of the bill did not 90 address stewardship. Because of this he would not support it at this time but would be supportive of 91 open space stewardship funding through another means than a tax. 92 93 Mr. Elliott suggested that the Town do so benchmarking and research of how other nearby towns are 94 currently funding their open space management. 95 96 Mr. Rice suggested that the Town could create a line item in the budget to address Open Space 97 management and then tax appropriately to fund this account. Mr. Rice said HB5254 would not be 98 necessary and he would not be in favor of it. 99 100 Mr. Wellman summarized that the Open Space Commission doesn't seem to be in support of HB5254 at 101 this time, the town will research other funding options for Open Space Management at a later date. 102 103 5.) Updates 104 Parks and Open Space Master Plan – Mr. Tyburski stated the panel made of staff, two Open Space 105 Commission Members and two Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission members interviewed four 106 firms on January 30, 2019. Weston and Sampson was the preferred candidate of the panel and the 107 Town is currently working out a contract with the firm. Ms. Masino mentioned that if possible, the 108 Town should try to fund (approx. \$4,000) a plant specialist to study Onion Mountain Park as part of this 109 process so that this area is include in the National Biodiversity Database. 110 111 Policies and Procedures Workgroup – Ms. Capriola let the group know that the Town's Planning 112 Department has been going through a period of staffing transition and that it is expected that the 113 Department will again be fully staffed in April and support staff will then be assigned to the Policies and 114 Procedures workgroup to support them in their work. 115 116 Belden Forest Old Growth Forest Designation Application – Ms. Capriola notified the group that the 117 Town had submitted its Old Growth Forest Application today. Ms. Masino who is part of the OGFN 118 shared that the Town's application will be reviewed soon and she hopes to have a ceremony in the fall 119 to formally recognize Belden Forest inclusion in the Old Growth Forest Network. 120 121 Ms. Masino also mentioned that there is a Lost Forests of New England documentary having its local premier on March 28<sup>th</sup> at Trinity College. 122 123 124 **ADJOURN** 

- 125 **Motion:** Ms. Winters made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:23PM. Mr. Bush seconded and all
- 126 were in favor.
- 127
- 128 Respectfully submitted,
- 129
- 130
- 131 Thomas Tyburski
- 132 Director of Culture, Parks and Recreation
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Maria E. Capriola - Town Manager

To:	Ericka Butler, Town Clerk
Cc:	Eric Wellman, First Selectman
From:	Maria E. Capriola, Town Manager
Date:	November XX, 2019
Re:	Open Space Committee – 2020 Regular Meeting Schedule

At their meeting on November 6<sup>th</sup> the Open Space Committee agreed by consensus to establish a regular meeting schedule for 2020. Meetings will be held bimonthly on the second Wednesday of January and the first Wednesdays of March, May, July, September and November at 4:30 pm.

Meeting dates are as follows:

January 8, 2020 March 4, 2020 May 6, 2020 July 1, 2020 September 2, 2020 November 4, 2020

The meetings will be held in the Main Meeting Room of the Town Hall, located at 933 Hopmeadow Street. Meetings will be properly noticed in accordance with FOIA requirements.