



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

P.O. BOX 495

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Conservation Commission / Inland Wetlands Regulatory Agency

June 22, 2020

Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Services
Office of Constituent Affairs/Land Management
79 Elm Street, 6th Floor
Hartford, CT 06070

Dear Ms. Clarke,

At the Conservation Commission meeting of June 2, 2020, the Commissioners unanimously voted to send a positive referral to the Board of Selectmen for of the acquisition of the Meadowood property.

This property is a vital habitat connector between Great Pond / Massacoe State Forest and the McLean Game Refuge. Such connections are a recommendation in the upcoming Parks and Recreation, Open Space Management Plan, and a core component of the Town's existing Plan of Conservation and Development. Managed as a grassland or meadow this property also has the opportunity to provide enhanced habitat for either nesting birds or for pollinators. Currently grasslands are among the most threatened and rare habitats in Connecticut and, as a result, grassland birds and many pollinating insects are on the decline in our state.

The opportunity for additional passive recreation trails through this property also meets with the goals of the upcoming Parks and Recreation, Open Space Management Plan. Such grassland hikes are also rare in Simsbury and would aid the public's appreciation for this habitat and its wildlife.

The Meadowood plan also calls for agricultural use on a portion of the property, along with the preservation of historic tobacco barns. Our POCD calls for maintaining and enhancing community character, and these barns and fields are specifically noted in the list of current resources that contribute to the character of the town. Furthermore, as the State of Connecticut is losing farmland faster than any other state in our country and soil is one of the least recognized national resources, the preservation of this land for farming is in the interest of the Town and its residents.

Although the Commission recognizes that these are challenging times for the Town, this is a rare opportunity to acquire such a valuable property for the future of the town.

Sincerely,

Margery Winters, Chair
On behalf of the Commission