



# ***Town of Colchester, Connecticut***

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Website: [www.colchesterct.gov](http://www.colchesterct.gov)

## **COLCHESTER OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **Regular Meeting Wednesday, September 12, 2022 Town Hall, 127 Norwich Avenue Minutes of Meeting**

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COLCHESTER, CT  
2022 SEP 15 PM 2:23  
Gayle Furman  
TOWN CLERK

Members Present: Chairman William Hochholzer, Jr., Ted Fuini and Lindsay Floyd (via phone in); Town Staff Carol Szymanski and invited speaker Leslie Curtis.

1. Call Meeting to Order: Chairman Will Hochholzer called the 9/12/22 meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.
2. Citizens Comments: None.
3. Approval of August 8, 2022 Meeting Minutes: Lindsay Floyd made the motion and Ted Fuini seconded the motion to approve the minutes of August 8, 2022.

Land Trust Speaker **LESLIE CURTIS** will discuss how we can work together to preserve more land and the importance of the new Chapter 92 (attached) in town ordinances. Ms. Curtis distributed annual reports of the land trust to the members as well as copies of her Open Space map which is a guideline for the land trust to concentrate their land conservation efforts to areas where there are still large tracts of forests and farmland which still have a high potential to be inter-connected for many conservation purposes, including wildlife conservation as well as for vital watershed protection and for keeping large swaths of good agricultural soil and carbon-sequestering timber-lands from being developed into suburban sprawl areas. Land Trust was started in 2001 with a 501(c)(3) designation in 2003. Adoption of Chapter 92 of the town ordinances now allows the town to participate financially, using taxpayer dollars and municipal bond funding, in land conservation efforts by any duly authorized land conservation organization, including those run as charitable enterprises and also those which are authorized agencies at all levels of government—not just specifically the Colchester Land Trust. These projects can now include conservation easements which would be held and managed in perpetuity by other conservation entities as well as the outright purchase of lands which would be owned by any other such conservation group. Ms. Curtis asked that members lobby the Board of Selectman to increase the annual amount of money (currently \$7,500) designated solely for open space purchases since the price of land purchase and other assessments required for purchase of open space far exceed this amount.

4. Open Space property updates:
  - a. Sablitz Family Farm Open Space:

Staff updated members on status of this open space. Staff working with attorney to update title to CT DEEP's satisfaction. Town will either do the work on the parking lot and trail or hire a contractor to do the work. Chairman suggested a site visit to see the sight. He noted that sight lines need to be provided on the site and that to meet ADA requirements that stone dust should be the preferred surface to accommodate the one required handicapped parking space and provide a good surface for hikers to walk on. Staff will set up a date and time for

members to visit the site and talk about what might need to be done there in preparation for trails and a parking area.

b. Browns Mill Phase 1 study complete (attached):

Members discussed whether the town or the state would accept this site as open space from the owners. There is a lot of river frontage on the Salmon River. Members agreed that the industrial structures should be demolished on the site.

c. Lincoln Lake Lodge up for tax sale b/c of delinquent taxes:

This site which is 99 acres will be subject to a tax sale in late October. The town would like to own this site for camps, open space and other uses but if the owners choose to pay off the tax lien, it will no longer be available for the town to purchase. Members were generally supportive of purchasing this property if the town could acquire it.

d. Cemetery Road trail connection between Day Pond State park and Babcock Pond State Park (town contract signed):

The CT DOT is requiring two flashing light crosswalks at the two state road crossings—route 149 and route 16 at a cost that exceeds the amount of the grant. Staff will continue to work with CT DOT to gain their final approval and determine if we have the grant funds to go forward with a bid process for the work.

6. Any Other Business Deemed Necessary

a. Discuss adding "DONATE" button to web page ("PRESERVE OPEN SPACE IN YOUR TOWN. Every dollar matters.") and a note such as "Remember us in your will. Let your legacy be open space protection in Colchester." Or create a flyer for web page:

Members did not think a donate button would add much to the coffers. Members thought that asking large land owners to donate large tracts of land to the town is a complex issue not easily resolved by a flyer on the webpage.

5. b. Discuss adding Open Space map (from POCD) to Open space committee's web page for easier accessibility by the public:

After a short discussion, Fuini made the motion and Floyd seconded the motion to add the open space map to the Open Space committee's web page. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Adjournment: Fuini made the motion and Floyd seconded the motion to end the meeting. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Carol Szymanski