

Town of Colchester
Open Space Advisory Committee
Monday, April 12, 2021
6pm Virtual Meeting Held via Zoom
Meeting Minutes

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2021 APR 16 PM 2:21
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TOWN CLERK

Members Present: Chairman Will Hochholzer, Vice Chairman Ted Fuini, Mary Stevens, Lindsay Barrard, Lindsay Floyd, BOS Liaison Rosemary Coyle and Town Staff Jay Gigliotti

Members Absent:

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Chairman William Hochholzer called the 4/12/21 OSAC Meeting to order at 6:00pm
2. **Citizens Comments:** None
3. **Approval of the February 8, 2021 Meeting Minutes:**

Lindsay Floyd motioned to approve the 2/8/21 OSAC meeting minutes as written. Seconded by Ted Fuini. All members voted in favor. Motion Carried.

4. **Open Space:**

A. Farm and Forest Preservation Program

Jay Gigliotti explained the OSAC discussed this program in February. He explained the proposal is to amend the language of Chapter 92 of the Colchester Code (Open Space Preservation Fund), to allow the town to contribute funds towards open space projects that do not ultimately result in town ownership. Staff has been reviewing the proposed amendment with the Town Attorney and hopes to have a draft of the revision to present to the Board of Selectmen soon. Review of the current language has brought up some other important items that need to be addressed, such as the revisiting the Town's now 15 year old open space plan and increases to the Town's annual \$5000 contribution set aside for open space preservation.

B. Brownfield Grant Discussion

The Town has submitted a brownfield assessment grant to the CT Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development. Jay Gigliotti reviewed the grant with the OSAC. The grant is for funding necessary to complete a Supplemental Environmental Site Assessment Phase I and a full Environmental Site Assessment Phase II, on a former mill site on Comstock Bridge Road. The owners has expressed interest preserving the property, but cannot transfer the land until the site is found to be clean. The Phase I & II shall result in knowledge of the presence of any contaminants. The grant was made for an amount of \$27,500.

C. UCONN Wildlife Management Plan

The Town has partnered with UCONN to complete a Wildlife Management Plan of the Ruby & Elizabeth Cohen Woodlands park located on McDonald Road. The development of the plan is nearing completion and shall be presented to staff on 4/22/21. Once finalized, the UCONN team shall present the completed management plan to the Board of Selectmen at a regular meeting. The goal of the plan is ensure the park operates in harmony with the wildlife and provide for recommendations. Jay Gigliotti provided the OSAC with some pictures taken by a trail camera placed in the park for the wildlife survey.

D. CT DEEP Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program

In late February 2021, the Town was notified the grant to purchase 65 acres of open space on Middletown Road had been awarded. However, the grant was only awarded approx. 1/3 of the funds that were requested. Staff attempted to find other ways to make up the difference in funding but found no other option but to ask the town for an additional appropriation. The Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance both approved the additional appropriation of \$87,000 needed in order to complete the acquisition. Jay Gigliotti thanked everyone who provided testimony in support of the grant. Currently, the survey work is being completed. Once the survey is complete, the town shall immediately begin the process to close on the property. A small parking lot, picnic area and trail network is planned for the property.

5. **Any Other Business Deemed Necessary:** None

6. **Adjournment**

Motion made by Mary Stevens to adjourn the 4/12/21 Regular Meeting of the Open Space Advisory Committee. Seconded by Kris Bernard. All members voted in favor. Motion Carried.

Chairman William Hochholzer adjourned the April 12, 2021 OSAC Meeting at 6:22pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Jay Gigliotti