

**Town of Colchester
Open Space Advisory Committee
Monday, May 10, 2021
6pm In-Person & Virtual Meeting
Meeting Minutes**

Meeting was held at Colchester Fish & Game Club property and also in Zoom

RECEIVED
COLCHESTER, CT
2021 MAY 12 PM 4:24
Leslie Fuini
GMI FURMAN
HOLEMAN

Members Present: Chairman Will Hochholzer, Vice Chairman Ted Fuini, Kris Barnard, BOS Liaison Rosemary Coyle, Leslie Curtis (Ag Commission) and Town Staff Jay Gigliotti

Members Absent: Mary Stevens, Lindsay Floyd

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Chairman William Hochholzer called the 5/10/21 OSAC Meeting to order at 6:00pm
2. **Citizens Comments:** Leslie Curtis, member of the Colchester Agriculture Commission, explained the Ag commission recently decided it would be beneficial for their members to be aware of the business of Town Boards/Commissions. This is a way for the Ag Commission to be aware of any items that may affect agriculture. In addition, Leslie spoke as a member of the Colchester Land Trust regarding the Trust's support and encouragement of amendments to Chapter 92 of the Colchester Code. The amendments would allow the Town to utilize designated open space funds on preservation projects that would not ultimately result in Town ownership or responsibility.
3. **Approval of the April 12, 2021 Meeting Minutes:**

Ted Fuini motioned to approve the 4/12/21 OSAC meeting minutes as written. Seconded by Kris Barnard. All members voted in favor. Motion Carried.

4. **Open Space:**

A. CT DEEP Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program

Jay Gigliotti informed the OSAC the property owner of the 65 acres of land on Middletown Road, subject to an awarded CT DEEP Open Space grant, had recently passed away. Unfortunately, this has resulted in the estate being sent to the probate courts. In speaking with the Town's closing Attorney, the estate is already proceeding through the probate process and the Town should be able to close on the property in a month or so. The survey work is nearly complete and the Town still intends to close as quickly as possible. The property shall be utilized as a passive recreation open space area. A parking area, picnic area and a trail network is planned for the property.

B. Brownfield Grant Discussion

The Town has submitted a brownfield assessment grant to the CT Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development (OBRD). Recently, the OBRD contacted staff with additional questions relating to the application. Working with the property owners, Jay Gigliotti responded to the OBRD's inquiries. The OBRD did not provide a timeframe for project awards, however, the program required a pre-application submission which may help speed up the review process. The grant was made for an amount of \$27,500 for environmental site investigation at a former mill site on Comstock Bridge Road.

C. 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 prepared draft revisions to the existing language and sent them to the Town Attorney for their review and recommendations. Unfortunately, staff is still waiting for the attorney. The attorney's review and recommendations will be presented to the Board of Selectmen to determine the steps to move forward. Staff shall continue to update the OSAC on the status.

D. Open Space Plan

The OSAC briefly discussed the Town's Open Space Plan during the last meeting in April. The Town's Open Space Plan was adopted in 2006, it is now 15 years old. Jay Gigliotti explained he felt that an update to the plan is needed. It is possible the Council of Governments or the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities could help with an estimate to update the Town's current plan. Leslie Curtis suggest the Town review the Land Trusts' corridor map, which identifies strategic open space preservation areas. Jay Gigliotti explained the current plan contains outdated information, maps, goals & objectives. The link to the Town's Open Space Plan is:

https://www.colchesterct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf4286/f/uploads/open_space_plan.pdf This link will also be provided on next month's OSAC Agenda.

E. UCONN Wildlife Management Plan

UCONN has completed their Wildlife Management Plan (WMP) for the Ruby & Elizabeth Cohen Woodlands. The UCONN team commenced the work on the WMP in mid-march and completed the work by mid-April. A full presentation of the findings and recommendations was provided to staff. A condensed presentation was provided to the Board of Selectmen. Jay Gigliotti explained UCONN was great to work with and the full WMP, as well as the powerpoint presentation provided to staff, shall be posted on the Town's website. The WMP will serve as reference guide for the Town and the numerous groups that utilize the park.

5. Any Other Business Deemed Necessary:

Vice-Chairman Ted Fuini stated he would like to research the possible use of Town Open Space for hunting purposes. He explained there are a number of Town's that allow hunting on Town property. Vice-Chairman Fuini shall provide research documents to the OSAC in an upcoming meeting.

6. Adjournment

Motion made by Kris Barnard to adjourn the 5/10/21 Regular Meeting of the Open Space Advisory Committee. Seconded by Ted Fuini. All members voted in favor. Motion Carried.

Chairman William Hochholzer adjourned the May 10, 2021 OSAC Meeting at 6:28pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Jay Gigliotti