

Town of Colchester
Open Space Advisory Committee
Monday, June 14, 2021
6pm Virtual Meeting
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Chairman Will Hochholzer, Mary Stevens, Lindsay Floyd, Kris Barnard, BOS Liaison Rosemary Coyle and Town Staff Jay Gigliotti

Members Absent: Vice Chairman Ted Fuini

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Chairman William Hochholzer called the 6/14/21 OSAC Meeting to order at 6:00pm

2. **Citizens Comments:** None

3. **Approval of the May 10, 2021 Meeting Minutes:**

Mary Stevens motioned to approve the 5/10/21 OSAC meeting minutes as written. Seconded by Kris Barnard. Mary Stevens & Lindsay Floyd abstained. All other members voted in favor. Motion Carried.

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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 by the middle of July. This could change, but as of right now that is the schedule. The survey work is complete and just needs to be drawn on a map. The Town still intends to close as quickly as possible. The property shall be utilized as a passive recreation open space area.

B. Farm and Forest Preservation Program

Jay Gigliotti explained the OSAC has discussed this program over the past several months. 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. Draft revisions to the existing language of Chapter 92 has been provided by the Town Attorney and these revisions shall be discussed at the 6/17/21 Board of Selectmen meeting. Staff will update the OSAC at the meeting next month.

C. CT DEEP Open Space and Watershed Lands Acquisition Program (OSWA)

Jay Gigliotti explained that he had recently learned the CT DEEP is accepting OSWA grant applications thru September. This program was recently utilized to secure funding for the acquisition of the Sablitz property on Middletown Road. The OSAC discussed open space funds, available properties, application development and the time by which to complete an application. Jay Gigliotti said it would have to be the

right application, for the right price, given the Town's now limited open space funds. The OSAC will keep an eye out for projects that may work, but suggested it may be to tight of a deadline to complete an application by September.

D. Community Conversation- Open Space

Jay Gigliotti explained to the OSAC that he had been invited to participate in a Community Conversation with the First Selectman, to discuss Open Space. The Community Conversations are a series of youtube live streamed videos where town topics are discussed. Mr. Gigliotti's conversation will be all about the Town's open space resources and plans. The conversation can be viewed live on July 7, 2021 at 330pm or can be viewed at a later date, on the Town's Facebook page. Staff shall send the OSAC members the link to the conversation in advance.

5. Any Other Business Deemed Necessary:

A discussion occurred regarding cancelling the July meeting and also about returning to in-person meetings.

6. Adjournment

Motion made by Kris Barnard to adjourn the 6/14/21 Regular Meeting of the Open Space Advisory Committee. Seconded by Mary Stevens. All members voted in favor. Motion Carried.

Chairman William Hochholzer adjourned the June 14, 2021 OSAC Meeting at 6:28pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Jay Gigliotti