

From: Susan Mazurski January 15, 2009 11:02:52 AM
Subject: Open Space Committee Minutes 12/03/2008 APPROVED
To: SimsburyCT_OpenMin
Cc:

MINUTES
OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting – December 3, 2008

1. Call to Order

Mary Glassman called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. in Main Meeting Room at the Simsbury Town Hall. Committee members present were John Loomis, Margery Winters and Dunny Barney.

The following people were also present: Jane Hannah, Tom Roy, Mike Hodges, Bruce Powell, Carol Clark-Flanagan, Chuck Howard, Diane Nash, Tom Zetterstrom, Susan Prentice and Peggy Hutton.

Ms. Glassman thanked Mr. Zetterstrom for coming to the meeting. She stated that he is very knowledgeable regarding trees. He recently came to Simsbury to give a slide presentation and to look at the trees in Town and to explain how to take care of the existing trees.

Regarding the Tree Committee, Ms. Glassman stated that she has talked with Sarah Floroski about having this Committee be part of the Main Street Committee for structural purposes. The Tree Committee will report to the Open Space Committee in terms of getting things done.

2. Public Audience

There was none.

3. Approve Minutes from November 5, 2008 Meeting

Mr. Loomis made one edit to the November 5, 2008 minutes.

Mr. Barney made a motion to approve the November 5, 2008 minutes. Mr. Loomis seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

4. Report from Diane Nash on Tree Committee Efforts

Ms. Nash stated that the Tree Committee met for the first time last month. Mr. Zetterstrom attended the meeting; he was very helpful in giving the Committee some direction. Jane Hannah has volunteered to be the Secretary of the Tree Committee; she took excellent minutes of that meeting.

Ms. Nash stated that the Tree Committee did write a mission statement at their meeting. They discussed educating the public and possibly

incorporating a photography contest of the trees in Town. This will not only help people get educated, but it will also get them involved.

Regarding the mission statement for the Tree Committee, Ms. Nash questioned if it encompassed enough to keep them from getting astray. She stated that there were still things that needed to be discussed.

5. Introduction of Tom Zetterstrom - Thoughts on Simsbury's Treescape Initiative

Mr. Zetterstrom stated that priorities need to be set as a Committee; there is a lot of work to be done.

There was some discussion regarding the work being done at Eno Memorial Hall. While construction has taken place, several things were done with disregard to the Elm tree in front. There needs to be tree preservation and protection during construction; this needs to be a category of responsibility for the Tree Committee going forward.

Mr. Zetterstrom stated that there are several things that the Tree Committee should consider, including a mission statement. He suggested developing the statement into a vision, a mission and goals. Regarding the inventory of trees for the 1.1 mile stretch, part of this would be inventory of tree sites as well as existing trees. The Tree Committee would then need to work with the collected data to develop a vision for the community forest and designing it. He stated that the Tree Committee should also make plans for Arbor Day, which will be part of the planting as well as an outreach opportunity.

Regarding the photo contest that the Tree Committee would like to have, Mr. Zetterstrom stated this was a great idea and they could also have an essay contest or poster contest closer to Arbor Day. Some of these events are sponsored by the National Arbor Day Foundation and other organizations. These are great ways to get children and adults involved.

Regarding the mission statement, Ms. Nash stated that their mission is clear and brief. Mr. Zetterstrom gave several examples of other Town's Tree Committee's mission statements. Mr. Barney stated that a lot of things regarding the trees in Town happen within the Planning and Zoning Commissions also. He feels that because of this, the Tree Committee should be a part of the Town and not Main Street Partnership. Ms. Glassman stated that they could discuss the structure of the Tree Committee at another time and decide what would be best.

Regarding Tree City USA standards and developing a treescape design for the Center area, Mr. Zetterstrom stated that one of the benefits of having a

well designed plan is that it will facilitate some funding. Businesses could sponsor trees, as well as get grants that are available. He stated that the plan defines the activities.

Mr. Zetterstrom stated that the Tree Committee should consider having education related programs within the Simsbury school systems. Many school systems have great programs that get children excited about trees at a young age. He stated that this education process can be done easily, one tree at a time. He discussed a grant opportunity that the National Arbor Day Foundation has just started for educating children, although there are still issues that they are trying to work out.

Mr. Barney stated that if there will be a smaller Charrette done for the Town Center, they should have a master plan for a tree planting in the Center done at the same time. Mr. Zetterstrom stated that there are simple inventories that can be done, such as a walking inventory or simple inventory regarding the tree's condition and location. He stated that this will help with the design moving forward. The Tree Committee agreed that they would get the most exposure by starting their work in the Center of Town. Ms. Glassman stated that step one is to identifying the species of trees that the Town has that are desirable and undesirable and what would be desirable in the future. They will also need to identify any hazards that the Town may have regarding trees that are a liability.

Ms. Nash stated that the Tree Committee needs to determine the trees they have and come up with a design for the 1.1 mile stretch and what they want the outcome to be for the future.

6. Report on Committee's visit to The Natick Community Organic Farm and Land's Sake

There was no report.

7. Update on Farmer's Roundtable

Ms. Glassman stated that there will be another Farmer's Roundtable on December 9th at 10 a.m. They will be talking to local farmers about how they can better utilize the Town's farming and agriculture lands.

8. Next steps - Notice of 2009 Community Farming Conference

There was no report.

9. Update on Town's purchase of Meadowood Triangle

Ms. Glassman stated that Simsbury is now officially the owners of the

Meadowood Triangle. She stated that the deed would be filed on Monday.

Ms. Glassman stated that there is a house and barn on this property; the Town has looked at the structure of both the house and the barn. Mr. Sawitzke stated that the barn, structurally, is in good shape. The house, in terms of the traditional analysis, is also in good shape, although it has been boarded up for some time. They will be looking at these structures more closely in the near future. He stated that the Town will be doing a general clean-up and will also secure the buildings. The uses of the land still need to be determined.

Mr. Sawitzke stated that an environmental review of the land was done. He stated that there is a small oil tank in the basement of the house that will need to be removed. There is also asbestos siding on the house; they need to determine if they can paint over that siding or if it needs to be removed. He stated that this land has great potential.

Ms. Glassman stated that it was negotiated that the Town would not be allowed to build any structures on this property, although the barn and house were excluded from this. This means that these structures can be renovated. The uses for this property will be discussed in the near future.

10. Adjourn

Mr. Barney made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:30 p.m. Ms. Winters seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.