

**Town of Colchester**  
**Open Space Advisory Committee**  
**Monday, August 14, 2017**  
**Colchester Town Hall 6:00 PM**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present:** Chairman Nick Norton, Vice-Chairman William Hochholzer, Ted Fuini, Mary Stevens, B.O.S. Liaison Rosemary Coyle, Town Staff Jay Gigliotti

**Members Absent:** None

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Chairman Nick Norton called the 8/14/17 OSAC Meeting to order at 6:01pm

2. **Citizens Comments:** None

3. **Approval of the July 10, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes**

Ted Fuini motioned to approve the 7/10/17 meeting minutes as written. Seconded by Mary Stevens. All Members voted in favor. Motion Carried

4. **Open Space:**

**A. P&Z Staff Updates**

Jay Gigliotti explained he only had a few items to discuss with the committee this month and each was really more of an update on previous items.

At the July Meeting of the OSAC, Jay Gigliotti told the committee about a 3.3 acre parcel of land located along the Salmon River as a potential open space acquisition. Before any real discussion could even take place about acquisition, the previous use of the property raised a number of flags and a phase I environmental site assessment (ESA) was performed. The previous use of the property was the operation of a hydro-powered mill that manufactured a number of different items.

The Phase I ESA concluded that due to the past known uses, as well as, uses common to all mills in the same era, the property has the potential to contain hazardous materials/contaminates and testing should be done to indicate whether or not the presence of these hazardous materials/contaminates exist and if so, what the levels of these contaminants are.

The testing for these contaminants/ hazardous materials must be done through a Phase II ESA, which has a specific protocol for testing of whether or not the presence of hazardous materials/contaminates. The problem has always been the cost associated with this Phase II level of testing. The cost of a Phase II ESA varies significantly from site to site. Factors affecting the cost of the Phase II include the size of the property and buildings, the number of and the amount of hazardous materials/contaminates, site topography, accessibility...etc.

As the property owner has indicated to P&Z Dept. staff, they would be unable to fund the cost of a Phase II ESA and were looking to donate the property. At the July meeting of the OSAC, Jay Gigliotti indicated that the P&Z Dept. was looking into alternate sources of funding to complete a Phase II ESA.

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As discussed last month, the problem with the town applying for funding to complete the Phase II ESA, is that almost all grants require the municipality to own the property where the Phase II shall occur in order to apply for the funding. This being a significant limiting factor, the research conducted by the Planning & Zoning Dept. resulted in really only one (1) potential source of funding for the Phase II.

The CT Audubon Society has a series of grants for brownfields, open space and utility work, which would allow for Phase II ESAs. In this grant series, the Town did not need to own the land, but a letter of intent to purchase the property, pending the results of the Phase II, would have to be included as part of the grant submission. Staff was unable to find a due date, application or submission requirements as it appears that the CT Audubon society has not selected a due date yet. The funds associated with this grant opportunity come from monetary fines, penalties or funds for wetland mitigation funds required through the Army Corps of Engineers, New England Regulatory District. These grants are funded by Army Corps enforcement activities and/or development applications/ permits. Staff shall continue to monitor the status of this grant opportunity.

### **American Community Garden Association**

Jay Gigliotti explained that the P&Z Dept. worked with the Colchester Garden club and the American Community Gardening Association to develop a tour of a number of significant gardens, farms and vineyards within Colchester. The attendees of the tour consisted of members of the Colchester Land Trust, the Colchester Garden Club, the Colchester Agricultural Commission and the American Community Gardening Association. A small charter bus was utilized to shuttle the attendees to each stop on the tour and the tour was conducted on Saturday, September 29, 2017.

Jay Gigliotti passed out copies of a Map, developed by the Planning & Zoning Department, which indicated all of the farms, vineyards and other gardens that were stops on the 9/29/17 tour. He explained that at the stop at the Ruby Cohen Woodlands, one of the tour attendees noticed the presence of Monarch Butterflies in one of the recent redeveloped gardens at the park. This was a significant observation as the Monarch butterflies are rarely found in this area.

### **Ruby & Elizabeth Cohen Woodlands StoryWalk™**

The Colchester Boy Scouts troop has begun work on developing a “StoryWalk” through the existing pedestrian trails at the Ruby Cohen Woodlands. A StoryWalk is a series of stops along a path and each stop includes a brief section of a story. From the start, the participant(s) read a small section of a story, the section is usually mounted on a post, and then walk a small distance to the next stop, which is the next small section of the story. The participant(s) continue to do this until they make their way through the entire story and trail. When they finish the story, they have also finished the trail!!

The Colchester Garden Club recently did a StoryWalk at Ruby Cohen Woodlands, however, the StoryWalk™ the Garden Club conducted, have each story station around the edge of the field at the park. The Boy Scouts StoryWalk™ shall be actively working its way through the existing trails with the public Ruby Cohen Park.

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

6. **Adjournment**

**Ted Fuini motioned to adjourn the August 14, 2017 meeting of the Open Space Advisory Committee, seconded by Mary Stevens. All members voted in Favor. Motion Carried.**

Chairman Nick Norton adjourned the August 14, 2017 OSAC meeting at 6:14 pm

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jay Gigliotti

