

Town of Colchester
Open Space Advisory Committee
Monday, September 11, 2017
Colchester Town Hall 6:00 PM
Regular Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Chairman Nick Norton, Vice-Chairman William Hochholzer, Mary Stevens and Town Staff Jay Gigliotti

Members Absent: Ted Fuini, B.O.S. Liaison Rosemary Coyle

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Chairman Nick Norton called the 9/11/17 OSAC Meeting to order at 6:00pm
2. **Citizens Comments:** None
3. **Approval of the August 14, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes**

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WILLIAM HOCHHOLZER
VICE CHAIRMAN
OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Vice-Chairman William Hochholzer motioned to approve the 8/14/17 meeting minutes as written. Seconded by Mary Stevens. All Members voted in favor. Motion Carried

4. **Open Space:**

A. Staff Update: Waterhole Road Open Space

Jay Gigliotti explained he had an update on 36 Waterhole Road for the committee. 36 Waterhole Road was an encroachment by a private property owner into town owned open space, which led to enforcement and eventually resubdivision to realign the towns open space limits. At the May OSAC meeting (5/8/17), the committee was presented with the situation and ultimately accepted the realignment with a caveat that the situation was unique.

Jay Gigliotti provided the committee with a map of the 36 waterhole Road property with the open space realignment highlighted. He also presented a signed and sealed letter from land surveyor who prepared the plans, indicating that the required "Open Space" placards were hung in accordance with the approved plan set. Jay Gigliotti continued to explain that not only had the placards had been installed, but the property owner has realigned an existing stone wall, to go right along the new open space line.

With the completion of the permit and the hanging of the placards, the property owner was able to file revised mylar plans in the land records. This officially closes & completes the situation.

B. Shrub Land & Young Forest Habitat

Jay Gigliotti told the committee that he had received a letter from Lisa Whale, of the CT DEEP. The letter was sent to all land owners in CT with a minimum of 20 acres. This letter details the decline in habitat, resulting in the decline of a number species including Eastern Towhee, American Woodcock, New England Cottontail, Prairie Warbler and Eastern Box Turtle. These species rely on habitat consisting of early successional growth, such as young forest and shrub land. While some of this type of habitat has been lost to development, the majority of the habitat simply disappears as forests grow older. The good news is young forest, with low dense growth that supports food and habitat for these species can be created through habitat management.

Discussion followed regarding the town and the potential to create some young forest growth on town properties. Vice-Chairman William Hochholzer recommended contacting National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to see if Colchester is eligible for their "Cost-Sharing Program". This program may help the town to select a "Technical service provider and develop a management plan for a property.

Vice-Chairman William Hochholzer stated that it is helpful to first have a management plan, before considering any habitat management. He explained that the Colchester Land Trust (CLT) develops a management plan for every single property/easement that they own using these "cost-share funds". Once the management plan is in place there is also potential for the "cost-sharing" to fund the implementation of the plan. Discussion followed on the types of open space holdings in town and some next steps. Staff shall look into Colchester's eligibility for the NRCS "cost-sharing" program.

Brownfield Grants:

Jay Gigliotti passed out eight (8) pictures of the dilapidated mill building on the 3.3 acre parcel of land on Comstock Bridge Road, currently under consideration for open space. As was discussed last meeting, the property has had a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) completed and is now in need of a Phase II ESA. A Phase II takes the recommendations for possible contaminants from the Phase I ESA and implements a testing plan to identify the presence of these hazardous contaminants.

Jay Gigliotti and the Town Planner Randy Benson are currently working on ways to fund the Phase II ESA. The property owners have indicated that they do not have means to conduct a Phase II ESA, which is estimated (approx.) at \$20,000. One of the potential funding sources will be the EPA Brownfields Program, which appears to be quite a detailed application, but will fund the Phase II if awarded. Within the Brownfield section of the Grant Programs there is a subsection for "Brownfield Assessments". Staff feels that we would fit into this category. However, another issue exists. The large amount of the dilapidated structure which is still present is going to cost a great deal more than originally thought. In the beginning staff thought there was just a small amount of building/mill debris left. Upon closer inspection, it was realized that there is quite a bit of building left. Discussion followed about the costs associated with building demo and other concerns.

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

6. **Adjournment**

Motion made by Mary Stevens to adjourn the 9/11/17 meeting of the Open Space Advisory Committee, seconded by Vice-Chairman William Hochholzer. All members voted in Favor. Motion Carried.

Chairman Nick Norton adjourned the September 11, 2017 OSAC meeting at 6:35 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Jay Gigliotti