

Town of Colchester
Open Space Advisory Committee
Monday, February 26, 2018
Colchester Town Hall 6:00 PM
Regular Meeting Minutes

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

Members Absent: B.O.S. Liaison Rosemary Coyle

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Chairman William Hochholzer called the 2/26/18 OSAC Meeting to order at 6:02pm

2. **Citizens Comments:**

Sandy DeRosa, of 59 Evergreen Terrace, addressed the committee regarding a series of trees on Cabin Road, posted by the Public Works Department, to be removed. Upon seeing the posting notice, Mrs. DeRosa contacted Jay Gigliotti to determine what could be done. She indicated the trees are all in good health and provide a number of benefits. Mr. Gigliotti directed her to the Public Works Department to oppose the removal. The public works director responded to her and has scheduled a hearing on the removal of the trees. According to the public works department, the trees have wrapped their roots around a water main and if they were to blow over in a storm, they could potentially take the water main with them thus knocking out water service for a large portion of the water district. Mrs. DeRosa and the committee discussed what her options were, some strategy for her pending hearing and advice on how & what to bring to attention at the hearing.

3. **Approval of the January 8, 2018 Regular Meeting Minutes:**

Linda Grzeika motioned to approve the 1/8/18 meeting minutes as written. Seconded by Ted Fuini. Nick Norton Abstained. All Other Members voted in favor. Motion Carried

4. **Open Space:**

Open Space Buyer's Conveyance Fee:

Jay Gigliotti explained that at the most recent Salmon River Watershed Partnership (SRWP) meeting, the group was presented with a proposal for new legislation enabling a series of towns to implement a buyers conveyance fee, to fund their open space programs as well as water & agricultural resource protection. This conveyance fee would be up to 1% fee collected on all residential real estate transactions in excess of \$150,000. The fee would be collected by the town and deposited into a specific account only to be used for open space preservation & stewardship, water resource and/or agricultural protection. The legislation is specific to only the towns who asked to be included in the bill and each would still have to adopt the fee at the municipal level in order to implement it. In Colchester, this would mean a town meeting.

Jay Gigliotti & Randy Benson (town planner) presented the proposed buyers fee to the Colchester Board of Selectmen on February 15, 2018. In addition to town staff, the Executive Director of the CT Land Conservation Council (CLCC) and Patricia Young of the SRWP was in attendance to present the proposed legislation to the Board of Selectmen. The Board of Selectman approved the endorsement of the legislation and also the addition of Colchester into the Bill. The Selectmen's endorsement and request for inclusion into the Bill was forwarded to the Planning & Development Committee at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. A public Hearing was held on Monday, 2/26/18.

The CLCC & the SRWP asked the towns to include representation at the public hearing so Jay Gigliotti & Randy Benson attended the hearing on 2/26/18 and provided testimony on the proposed legislation on behalf of the town. The proposed buyers fee legislation has been titled S.B. 181 "An Act Establishing a Pilot Program for the Preservation of Open Space.

The committee discussed the proposed legislation and the Jay Gigliotti provided a number ways the proposed bill could benefit Colchester. Mr. Gigliotti shall update the committee on the status of the bill moving forward.

Recreational Trails Program Grant

Jay Gigliotti passed out a map of the “Richard Goodwin” trail network, which has recently been completed by the towns the trail passes through and also the 8-Mile River watershed. The map shows the areas of the trail that has been completed and is open for public use. The map does not show the area where the trail network enters Colchester through the Babcock Pond Wildlife Management Area, as the trail in this area is not completed and not open for public use.

Jay Gigliotti explained the awarded grant was for the design of a trail from the Babcock Pond Wildlife Management Area, across Route 16 through Cemetery Rd, then through Church Street and across Route 149 and into Day Pond State Park. He explained the survey of the project area has been completed and he is currently waiting for response from CT DOT regarding the crosswalks. Unfortunately, everything is waiting for the permitting of the two crosswalks to move forward. Jay Gigliotti has had difficulties contacting the permitting department of CT DOT in Newington, CT. He has called, emailed, mailed, hand delivered and had CT DEEP contact the DOT office, and still no response.

In the meantime, another component of the grant is the promotion of physical activity and trail use. Jay Gigliotti has partnered with other agencies, specifically, the Chatham Health District, in order to do this. Currently, the Town & the Health District is working to develop a trails brochure for use on National Trails Day. Mr. Gigliotti is also working with the SRWP and in their annual newsletter, will also promote physical activity & trail use.

The committee discussed the specifics of the crosswalks and if there were other options.

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

6. **Adjournment**

Motion made by Ted Fuini to adjourn the 2/26/18 meeting of the Open Space Advisory Committee, seconded by Nick Norton. All Members Voted in Favor. Motion Carried.

Chairman William Hochholzer adjourned the February 26, 2018 OSAC meeting at 6:37pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Jay Gigliotti