

Town of Colchester
Open Space Advisory Committee
Monday, March 12, 2018
Colchester Town Hall 6:00 PM
Regular Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Chairman William Hochholzer, Nick Norton, Linda Grzeika, B.O.S. Liaison Rosemary Coyle and Town Staff Jay Gigliotti

Members Absent: Vice-Chairman Ted Fuini and Mary Stevens

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Chairman William Hochholzer called the 3/12/18 OSAC Meeting to order at 6:02pm
2. **Citizens Comments:** None
3. **Approval of the February 26, 2018 Regular Meeting Minutes:**

Linda Grzeika motioned to approve the 2/26/18 meeting minutes as written. Seconded by Nick Norton. All Members voted in favor. Motion Carried

4. **Open Space:**

Mapping of Trees

Jay Gigliotti provided the committee with a map showing the locations of three (3) trees the committee discussed at the previous meeting. Mr. Gigliotti developed the map so the committee members could better understand and visualize the locations of the trees. He explained a hearing on the tree removal had been scheduled for 3/7/18, however it had to be rescheduled due to a winter storm. At this time a make-up date has not yet been determined. Linda Grzeika asked Jay Gigliotti to let her know when a make-up date had been scheduled as she was curious about the procedure of the hearing.

Moroch Property Open Space Signage

Jay Gigliotti explained the recently acquired Moroch Property open space, required signage to be placed at the an entrance, indicating the property was purchased utilizing funds from the CT DEEP Open Space & Watershed Program. The town had recently received the sign ordered for the Moroch Property and while inspecting it, staff quickly noticed a spelling error on the new sign. Fortunately, the error is small and in speaking with the sign company, may be able to be repaired without having to remake the entire sign. He explained he wanted to have the sign available for the OSAC to view this evening, but due to the error he couldn't. Jay Gigliotti is working with the Public Works Operations Director to get the sign repaired and installed. He will keep the committee updated as to the status of the Moroch Property sign.

Army Corps of Engineers/ Audubon Society Grant Opportunity

Jay Gigliotti explained there is new grant opportunity from the Army Corps of Engineers and the CT Audubon Society. He explained the funds made available in the grant opportunity have been collected by the Army Corps of Engineers through their regulatory compensatory mitigation fee in lieu program. The funds collected have been made available by CT Watersheds and Colchester falls within the Thames River Watershed and the Connecticut River Watershed. Approx. ¾ of the town is located within the Connecticut River Watershed, while the other ¼ lies within the Thames River Watershed. The grant opportunity is for \$144,410 for the CT River and \$1,684 for the Thames River Watershed.

The grant funds have been made available for the preservation, restoration and enhancement of wetland and watercourse resources and associated upland buffers. Jay Gigliotti explained the application guidelines require a two-part application process. The first part is the submission of a Letter of Intent. The letter of Intent is due April 16, 2018 and is a brief explanation of the proposed grant application. Letters of intent are reviewed by both the ACOE & Audubon Society as a kind of pre-application screening. If they find your proposal acceptable, the ACOE/Audubon Society notify the applicant either to proceed or not to.

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Linda Grzeika

The notification to proceed begins the second part of the process which is the actual application. Jay Gigliotti discussed the details of the application and application requirements with the committee. He explained a grant application from Colchester would be either for the \$144,467 in the CT River Watershed or the \$1,657 in the Thames River Watershed. He presented the committee with several ideas for grant applications. The OSAC discussed the potential for an application to remove invasive species from the pond at the Ruby & Elizabeth Cohen Woodlands. A host of other waterbodies were discussed however, because the town did not have ownership, a grant application might be quite difficult to secure before the grant deadlines. Jay Gigliotti will review the potential for a grant application at the Ruby Cohen Woodlands and report back to the committee.

Open Space Buyer's Conveyance Fee

Jay Gigliotti briefly reviewed the open space funding buyer's fee with the committee. The Committee had discussed this topic at length during their February regular meeting. Since the Board of Selectmen endorsed the idea of the buyer's fee, there has been a lot of incorrect information floating around in the public. The committee discussed what the next steps would be should the Bill make it out of the Planning & Development Committee. Even if the Bill was passed by the legislator, it would still need several additional approval to enter into law. Once that happens, the Town would still have to first draft an ordinance for the buyer's fee and then have it voted on at a Town Meeting. So there are still a number of hurdles to clear before anything can happen relating to the buyer's fee. Jay Gigliotti will keep the committee informed as to the status of the buyer's fee.

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

6. **Adjournment**

Motion made by Nick Norton to adjourn the 3/12/18 meeting of the Open Space Advisory Committee, seconded by Linda Grzeika. All Members Voted in Favor. Motion Carried.

Chairman William Hochholzer adjourned the March 12, 2018 OSAC meeting at 6:24pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Jay Gigliotti