

Town of Colchester
Open Space Advisory Committee
Monday, June 11, 2018
Colchester Town Hall 6:00 PM
Regular Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Chairman Will Hochholzer, Vice-Chairman Ted Fuini, Nick Norton, Linda Grzeika, B.O.S. Liaison Rosemary Coyle and Town Staff Jay Gigliotti

Members Absent: Mary Stevens

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Chairman William Hochholzer called the 6/11/18 OSAC Meeting to order at 6:01pm
2. **Citizens Comments:** None

3. **Approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes:**

The March 12, 2018 minutes were tabled at the 4/9/18 meeting as there were not enough members present to vote on the March minutes at the April Meeting. Then, the May 9, 2018 regular meeting was not held due to a lack of quorum. So during the 6/11/18 regular OSAC meeting, both the 3/12/18 and the 4/9/18 meeting minutes were discussed and voted on.

March 12, 2018 Regular Meeting Minutes:

Nick Norton motioned to approve the 3/12/18 OSAC meeting minutes. Seconded by Vice-Chairman Ted Fuini. Ted Fuini Abstained. All other members voted in Favor. Motion Carried.

April 9, 2018 Regular Meeting Minutes:

Linda Grzeika motioned to approve the 4/9/18 OSAC meeting minutes. Seconded by Vice-Chairman Ted Fuini. Nick Norton & Linda Grzeika Abstained. All other members voted in Favor. Motion Carried.

4. **Open Space:**

Moroch Property Open Space Signage

Jay Gigliotti informed the OSAC that the signage has been installed on Dutton Road, indicating the Moroch Property Open Space has been combined with the Ruby & Elizabeth Cohen Woodlands and that the property was purchased with funds awarded by the CT DEEP Open Space and Watershed lands Acquisition Grant Program. The entrance to the Ruby Cohen Park off McDonald Rd already has a sign indicating the how the park purchase was funded. The signage is a requirement of the grant, however, because the original Ruby Cohen Woodlands property was purchased with the same funding mechanism, a separate sign for the Moroch Property was not needed. The signage was ultimately installed to inform the public of the origin of this section of the park and to pay tribute to the former property owner, Mr. Stanley Moroch Sr. Jay Gigliotti explained the signage is located on Dutton Rd about 25' into the property. He provided a photo of the sign and encouraged the members to drive by to see it.

Army Corps of Engineers/ Audubon Society Grant Opportunity

Jay Gigliotti explained the OSAC had endorsed the P&Z Department's submission of an application to the Army Corps of Engineers & CT Audubon Society (ACOE) grant opportunity, for the removal and management of Phragmites (an invasive species) at the Ruby Cohen Woodlands. The Phragmites, located in an inland wetland off one of the parks trails, is causing the wetland to lose its function and is negatively affecting the wildlife. Jay Gigliotti explained he submitted a "letter of intent" to the ACOE and received notice that they were interested in the project. The ACOE asked for a cost estimate for the proposal, which Mr. Gigliotti sent immediately. Several weeks after sending the project cost estimate, Jay Gigliotti

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NICK NORTON
VICE CHAIRMAN

received a notice from the ACOE stating the project was not in the correct watershed for where the grant funds were available. In addition, the ACOE notice indicated that the proposal could not just be for invasive species removal and had to be part of a larger project. Jay Gigliotti instantly responded to the ACOE indicating that the project was indeed in the correct watershed and listed a number of other components of the project. Unfortunately the ACOE has not yet responded and the grant application deadline is coming up. Jay Gigliotti stated he shall continue to try and get a hold of the ACOE to discuss the application and the available funding. Planning for the worst case scenario, Jay Gigliotti explained that he is already looking into alternate funding sources and shall keep the OSAC informed as to the status.

CT Green Burial

Representatives of CT Green Burial Grounds (CGBG) contacted Jay Gigliotti regarding the possibility of a Green Burial Ground in Colchester. Green Burial Grounds are essentially cemeteries that use only natural burial methods. Specifically, there is no embalming of the body and no extravagant coffins. In most cases, the body is wrapped in a cotton shroud and buried directly in the ground without any chemicals to preserve the body. The result is a natural, environment friendly burial and a decomposition process that does not contribute any chemicals into the surrounding earth or ground water. The body is buried in an excavated hole and a tree is planted above the grave. There usually no headstones, rather a small plaque is secured to the tree.

CGBG asked Jay Gigliotti if the town was aware of any land for sale that would suit their needs. They are looking for land between 10-100 acres in size, without steep slopes or a significant amount of wetlands. There are currently no cemeteries in Connecticut that are exclusively green cemeteries. There is one in Danbury, CT which is a hybrid of a conventional and green cemetery, but that is the only one in Connecticut that offers these new burial methods. If CGBG was able to secure an appropriate piece of land, they would be responsible for all of the permitting and maintenance of their proposed green burial grounds. They are not asking for any assistance from the town other than whether or not there is any land available that would suit their needs.

CGBG additionally stated that if they were able to make their proposal a reality, the burial grounds would additionally act as public open space. The property could offer trails, and other passive recreational opportunities, as well as protect land from being developed in perpetuity. According to CGBG's demographic research, people who are interested in green burial grounds would travel up to 100 miles to be part of a green burial ground. This would bring people into town in addition to preserving land and environmental protection. Colchester would, potentially, be a "pioneer" in the state when it came to green burial grounds. Jay Gigliotti explained that something like this would almost certainly raise a number of concerns from citizens and he was not advocating for CGBG in any way. He stated he was only mentioning this to the OSAC because of the open space potential indicated by CGBG.

Salmon River Watershed Partnership Upcoming Summer Events

Jay Gigliotti explained to the OSAC about the town's role in the Salmon River Watershed Partnership (SRWP). Approximately ¾ of the Town of Colchester is located in the Salmon River Watershed and in 2009 the town entered into a compact to protect the watershed. Jay Gigliotti is Colchester's representative for the SRWP. Jay Gigliotti presented the OSAC with x6 events the SRWP is a part of this summer and provided the members with several other volunteer opportunities that the SRWP is either sponsoring or is a part of.

Jay Gigliotti also briefly discussed the SRWP Stream Monitoring program. He explained that this is then 6th season of recording stream data such as temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, invertebrates and other info. These data sets are recorded in a number of streams throughout the watershed. The data has been recorded for enough years now, which has resulted in researchers being able to see trends in the data and identify areas where conservation, protection or enhancement is needed. The results of which, allows the SRWP to develop management plans and other regulations geared towards ultimately protecting these natural resources for many years to come.

Freedom of Information Event

Jay Gigliotti provided the OSAC members with a flyer from the FOI Commission, inviting town commission members to attend a workshop about the Freedom of Information Act. The workshop intends to educate commission members about the correct way to implement the FOI Act and to ensure all meetings are consistent with the act.

Cabin Road Tree Removal Hearing

Linda Grzeika told the commission that she had attended a hearing on the removal of a series of trees on Cabin Road. At the February OSAC meeting, Mrs. Sandy DeRosa, a resident of Evergreen Terrace addressed the OSAC about the scheduled removal of these trees on Cabin Road. A hearing was scheduled and due to winter weather events, the hearing was only just recently conducted. Linda Grzeika explained how the meeting went and commended the Public Works Department in how they handled the hearing. She explained that there were a number of people who attended the hearing, some that were not from Colchester, most who were against the removal.

5. Any Other Business Deemed Necessary:

Chairman William Hochholzer explained to the OSAC that he was not going to be able to attend the July meeting. The OSAC discussed the potential to reschedule or to just cancel the 7/9/18 OSAC meeting. Jay Gigliotti explained that he did not believe he was going to have any time sensitive matters to discuss with committee and that he could certainly wait until the August meeting. The OSAC determined that with the summer here it may just be best to cancel the July meeting ahead of time in case any other members had plans. Jay Gigliotti shall file a cancellation notice with the Town Clerk for the 7/9/18 OSAC meeting and also send out an email to all the members prior to the meeting.

Motion made by Linda Grzeika to cancel the July 9, 2018 Open Space Advisory Committee meeting. Seconded by Nick Norton. All Members voted in Favor. Motion Carried.

6. Adjournment

Motion made by Nick Norton to adjourn the 6/11/18 meeting of the Open Space Advisory Committee, seconded by Vice-Chairman Ted Fuini. All Members Voted in Favor. Motion Carried.

Chairman William Hochholzer adjourned the June 11, 2018 OSAC meeting at 6:33pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Jay Gigliotti