

NEWINGTON OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting

March 10, 2016

Chairman Bernadette Conway called the regular meeting of the Newington Open Space Committee to order at 6:35 p.m. in Room L100 in the Newington Town Hall, 131 Cedar Street, Newington, CT.

I. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present:

Commissioner Gail Budrejko
Commissioner Bernadette Conway
Commissioner Sharon Dunning
Commissioner Carol Wojtowicz

Town Staff Present:

Craig Minor, Town Planner

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as submitted.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 11, 2014:

Commissioner Sharon Dunning made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Commissioner Carol Wojtowicz. All were in favor.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. CT Greenways Council:

Chairman Conway introduced Allyson Clark, a Newington resident who is familiar with the CT Greenways program. She explained that land which has been designated by the CT Greenways Council as a "CT Greenway" would be in a better position to receive grants for funding and other benefits. Newington currently has several CT Greenways. She did not think that land needs to belong to the Town to be eligible for designation as a CT Greenway, but if the Town were to submit land that it does not own, the owners ought to be informed. Chairman Conway asked if it would be better strategically for the Town to bundle several Greenway nominations, or to submit them separately. Allyson said she did not know but would try to find out. She added that Governor Malloy is particularly interested in urban greenways. (Chairman Conway reminded the Committee that we need to come up with a new, better name for the Marcap Parcccl.) Chairman Conway thanked Allyson for coming to the meeting.

B. Provision #3 of Town Council Resolution establishing the Open Space Committee:

Town Planner Craig Minor reported that he sent a memo to the Acting Town Manager with the Committee's request that Provision #3 of the Town Council Resolution which established the Open Space Committee be revised, to allow the Committee to use its own initiative. The Resolution currently only allows the Committee to pursue activities as specifically directed by the Town Council. This will be on the March 22, 2016 agenda of the Town Council for discussion.

C. Review work done by Previous Open Space Committee:

The Committee discussed the minutes from the last twelve months of the previous Open Space Committee, including the open space inventory. Chairman Conway noted that the previous Committee actually accomplished quite a lot, especially the inventory of open spaces that they worked on toward the end of their active period, but did not finish it. Carol Anest asked Mr. Minor to find that list so the Committee could determine if it is still valid. Chairman Conway noted that the minutes from December 16, 2010 talk about a PowerPoint presentation delivered by the Town's GIS specialist Thad Dymkowski, and she asked Mr. Minor to see if that presentation still exists.

D. Open Space Inventory and Map:

The Town Planner said that the problem with a definition of open space based solely on what the property looks like (such as woods and meadows) and not whether the property is protected from future development leaves the Town vulnerable to another "Mill Pond Park" controversy. The Committee then discussed the "open space matrix" which the Town Planner created to help the Committee prioritize its efforts. Two important characteristics of an open space parcel are: (1) whether it is protected from future development by language in the deed or some other document, and (2) whether it is publicly owned. Publicly Owned/Deed Restricted provides the most protection, and Privately Owned/Not Deed Restricted provides no protection. Mr. Minor said that he would work on assigning all open space parcels to one of the four sections of the matrix.

E. Status of Open Space Management Strategy:

The Committee discussed the scope of the open space management strategy, and agreed that it should be limited to passive recreation open space parcels only; i.e, it should not include parks and playgrounds that are maintained by the Newington Parks and Recreation Department. The Committee then reviewed the draft "Open Space Management Plan" table that the Town Planner had prepared, which lists several attributes (access; ADA-accessibility; parking; security monitoring; etc.) of two Town-owned open space parcels (the Marcap Parcel and the Deming Farm parcel). He mentioned that, once the Committee comes up with a management strategy, it would probably become the responsibility to execute it since they have staff and funding, which the Committee does not. Chairman Conway questioned this assumption, and suggested that perhaps a "Friends of..." made up of volunteers could be formed to do the maintenance of the Town's passive recreation open space parcels. It was agreed that the Committee would keep working on the draft Management Plan table.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

David Goodale, 1741 Main Street: Mr. Goodale gave a status report on the barn at the Deming-Young Farm. Chairman Conway asked if the Committee could take a tour of the farm some Saturday. Mr. Goodale agreed. No date was set.

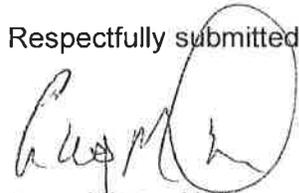
VI. COMMITTEE MEMBERS COMMENTS

Chairman Conway reported that "Project Greenspace" (AKA the Audubon bill) was on hold at the CT legislature due to the State budget crisis. Commissioner Wojtowicz gave an update on her efforts to revive the "Newington Open Space Trust" (NOST, Inc.), and that there will be a meeting of the old members. Town Planner Craig Minor suggested they consider "contracting" with the Berlin Land Trust, as was done by some landowners in Cromwell when he was the Town Planner there. Commissioner Wojtowicz said that she had contacted the West Hartford land trust, but got no reply.

VII. ADJOURN

Commissioner Dunning moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Wojtowicz. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Minor', is written over a circular stamp or seal.

Craig Minor, AICP
Recording Secretary

