

NEWINGTON OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting

May 12, 2016

Chairman Bernadette Conway called the regular meeting of the Newington Open Space Committee to order at 6:30 p.m. in Room L101 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

Chairman Conway requested that the proposed realignment of Maple Hill Avenue be added to the agenda under "New Business". Commissioner Dunning made that motion, seconded by Commissioner Wojtowicz; all were in favor. The agenda was then approved as amended.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 14, 2016:

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

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Proposed Realignment of Maple Hill Avenue:

Town Planner Craig Minor informed by Committee that the Town Plan and Zoning Commission is spearheading an effort to install a traffic signal light at the intersection of Alumni Drive and Cedar Street. This will include shifting the north end of Maple Hill Avenue approximately 100' to the west, to line up with Alumni Drive, and putting a cul-de-sac where Maple Hill Avenue currently intersects Cedar Street. The relocation of Maple Hill Avenue was approved by TPZ back in 2002 when the subdivision containing

the four house lots at the north end of Maple Hill Avenue was approved. It is currently vacant land, but not “open space”.

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

Commissioner Budrejko reported that the Town Council has revised the Resolution that established the Open Space Committee, as requested.

- “3. Upon request from the Town Council, the Open Space Committee shall make recommendations to the Town Council as to Open Space implications on such issues as the acquisition of real property, the sale of Town property, the protection and utilization of existing Town owned property, the financial impact of property acquisition with or without external funding sources and potential use of the Capital Improvement Fund. The Open Space Committee may make recommendations to the Town Council whenever deemed appropriate by the Committee.”

C. Possible CT Greenway Nomination:

Chairman Conway noted that this is probably moot, since the window to submit nominations closed on April 29, 2016. The Town Planner suggested that nominations will probably be invited again the same time next year, so if there are areas in town that the Committee feels would benefit from Greenway designation, this is the perfect time to start working on an application. Commissioner Budrejko suggested the Marcap Parcel, since the current CT Greenway in that area of town is just the “Old Highway”. As an aside, Chairman Conway said she would contact the Town Council Naming Committee about their efforts to come up with a better name for the Marcap Parcel.

D. Review work done by Previous Open Space Committee:

Chairman Conway asked if anyone had anything to add to last month’s discussion about the work done by the previous open space. There was none.

E. Open Space Inventory and Map:

The Town Planner suggested the spreadsheets be amended to include each parcel’s street address, instead of just the reference to the map of open space parcels. Commissioner Dunning suggested the spreadsheets be dated with the current date.

It was suggested that the Open Space Committee have a booth at the upcoming Extravaganza on July 16. A big map of Newington open space could be displayed, and proposed names for the Marcap Parcel solicited. Town Planner Minor said that he thinks the Parks and Rec Department has a booth that they might be willing to share with the Committee. Chairman Conway said she would look into this.

F. Possible Greenway along Proposed I-291 Corridor:

The Committee had a long discussion about the feasibility of establishing a “CT Greenway” on the undeveloped portion of the I-291 highway that had been proposed in the late 1970’s, running from Main Street to Route 9. The Town Planner presented maps of the area and informed the Committee that all of the parcels are either Town- or State-owned. One small parcel on Maple Hill Avenue is developed with two houses, but it belongs to the State. It was noted that the CCSU-owned portion is on the west side of the Amtrak tracks, and that Amtrak will probably not want to allow hikers to cross the tracks. This item will remain on the agenda for future meetings.

Commissioner Budrejko inquired about the status of the “Open Space Zone” that TPZ was working on last year. The Town Planner replied that it still pending and will probably be back on TPZ’s agenda within a month or so.

G. Status of Open Space Management Strategy:

The Committee reviewed the draft OS Management chart of passive recreation parcels (Deming Farm and the Marcap Parcel) and maintenance issues and activities for each. The Town Planner reminded the Committee that they agreed last month to visit each parcel to determine specific maintenance items and allowable activities. Chairman Conway said she would contact the members by email to find a date that convenient. The Town Planner said that he will add the other passive recreation open space parcels (e.g. the I-291 corridor parcels) to the chart.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Stanley Sobieski, 26 Deepwood Drive: Mr. Sobieski said that he was part of the Alumni Drive traffic signal initiative, and gave a brief summary of the project. He then gave the history of the I-291 project, and suggested the Town Planner contact Amy Rodriguez at CTDOT about that parcel with the two houses. He warned the Committee that Amtrak does not want people crossing the track or even being near it, especially since frequent commuter service will be starting in a year or two.

David Goodale, 1741 Main Street: Mr. Goodale reminded the Committee that the Deming-Young Farm Foundation will hold a tag sale this Saturday from 9 am -2 pm.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive: Ms. Lyons asked if the “Public Participation” item could be moved up on the agenda, for people who want to say something but don’t want to stay to the end of the meeting. She also wanted to know the name of the person who claimed that the Maple Hill Avenue realignment would consume “open space”. She was glad to hear that the Town Council was working to come up with a better name for the “Marcap Parcel”. She said that, as a priority, acquiring the rest of Cedar Mountain was more important than getting more CT Greenways designated.

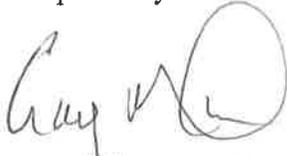
VI. COMMITTEE MEMBERS COMMENTS

None.

VII. ADJOURN

Commissioner Wojtowicz moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Budrejko. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig Minor". The signature is stylized with a large, circular flourish at the end.

Craig Minor, AICP
Recording Secretary