

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes

Craft Room 3, Community Center

Shelton, CT

Monday, January 26, 2004

Members Present: **Dave Zamba**
 Tom Harbinson
 Celeste Beattie
 Regis Dognin
 Ed Conklin

Members Absent: **Ken Olin**
 Harriet Wilber
 Neil Hayes
 Paul Gabor
 Ralph Rotondo
 Karen McGovern

Also in attendance: Jim Pjura, Conservation Resource Specialist

Dave Zamba, Co-Chairman at 7:40 P.M, called the January 26, 2004 meeting of the Open Space Committee to order. All in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Review of Minutes

The committee reviewed the minutes from the November 24, 2003 meeting. **Regis Dognin made a motion to accept the November 24, 2003 minutes and Ed Conklin seconded the motion. All were in favor, motion passed.**

Treasurer's Report

Tom Harbinson reported that he did not have it available tonight. Jim Pjura presented the budget report to see how the funding is allocated and that he would be getting together with Rick Schultz to go over all the subdivisions approved to know what is forecasted for the open space account, whether it is on a per lot basis or a lump sum payment. There will be a deduction from the account for the purchase of the two parcels (Goodman) on Constitution Blvd.

Tom Harbinson showed the committee the presentation from the Conservation Commission that was presented to the Board of Aldermen earlier this month. This presentation was on the three parcels the Commission is interested in having the City purchase, possibly for open space or other municipal uses, before they get developed into housing. The three parcels are the Tall Farm (33 acres), located on Long Hill Avenue, the Wiacek (46 acres) property, located on Meadow St., near the high school, and the Wabuda (70 acres) property, located on East Village Road. Tom Harbinson showed the committee members pictures they presented of each property, the location as it pertains to adjoining open space or land trust property, the views, the size of the lots and the benefits. The presentation is also available on the City web site. The sole purpose of the presentation was to give them information on the three parcels available, not giving any priority to any, just so that the Mayor and the Aldermen can make a decision if they want to pursue. At the next meeting the Aldermen made a motion to give the Mayor the authorization to proceed with negotiations with the property owners.

Dave Zamba stated that at the last Board of Aldermen meeting they discussed the idea of obtaining open space downtown at the "slab". Jim Ryan (SEDC) and the Mayor are working with the State in which want to switch the development off of what they already have as green space and move it from the Veterans Memorial to the Shelton-Derby bridge and develop that land instead.

Tom Harbinson asked Jim Pjura if he got any information from the Ordinance on how the Open Space is funded. Jim gave Tom Harbinson the budget, which showed the breakdown of the percentage of reimbursement.

Dave Zamba stated that a copy of the annual report from Planning & Zoning is available for all to review. Single-family permits were the lowest in 40 years last year. This shows we are running out of land and the shift is going towards the density housing. Planning & Zoning is putting together a committee to update their 1992 "plan of development". Tom Harbinson is going to be serving on this committee.

Dave Zamba asked what is the percentage that they can ask for regarding open space on a development. 15% is the goal, but Ed Conklin said that he believed it was a state statute that allows the City to ask for 10%. Dave Zamba asked if there was a way to get more than 10%, especially if it was adjacent to other open space parcels. Ed Conklin said the 10% is enforceable issue in court, and it is not mandatory either. 15% was the overall goal of total open space in the City.

Subdivisions

Dave Zamba stated that there are no new subdivisions presented to Planning & Zoning to discuss tonight. He asked if anyone wanted to talk about any new ones they knew of.

Tom Harbinson said that he believed there is one coming up right across the street from the high school on Ten Coat Lane. There is no open space dedication, but a fee in lieu of.

Wiacek has a subdivision ready to be voted on, and the Tall Farm had a concept application in to Inland Wetlands, Cranberry Hill Estates had gone through Inland Wetlands and is in Planning & Zoning and waiting for the decision now that the public hearing has closed.

The development proposed at the Pinecrest had their public hearing and the number of units keeps decreasing as time goes on.

Mr. Zuckerman has just put in an application to Inland Wetlands for a parcel on Wintergreen Lane (upper corner of the property where Pinecrest is) where he wants to develop "affordable housing". Celeste Beattie showed the committee the drawing from the approved application back in 1999, where they showed a nature trail. The new application does not have the trail included and Celeste said that the Inland Wetlands Commission told Mr. Zuckerman to revise his plans and come back for review again. She received new plans in the mail this week and the plans showed various plans. There was discussion on the fact that when a subdivision comes in for review, that no matter where the development is taking place, that the 10% for open space should come from the entire parcel.

The development is going in as affordable housing and they do not have to give open space. It was debated whether the subdivision was really approved in 1999 by Planning & Zoning. Ed Conklin said that the piece that was applied for in 1999 is still being argued in court. Originally it was not an affordable housing development, but after a while it was changed to only put one of the units (25%) affordable, to insure that the City could not stop the development. Celeste stated that the Commission left last month's meeting with that they did not like what was proposed and the Zuckerman's are to come back with a new proposal. They still have to follow the regulations regarding the wetlands and watercourses. This committee will wait until there is a formal plan to Planning & Zoning to see if there is a need for a memo regarding preservation of a trail or open space. P & Z closed the public hearing in January, and they have 65 days to make a decision. There was discussion on how the whole lot was split off, whether it was a free split or not. Tom Harbinson said he would investigate it and report back at the next meeting.

Tom Harbinson reported that the Conservation Commission did write a comment letter regarding the height on the Scinto proposed apartment complex.

Celeste Beattie mentioned the building of more retail space on Bridgeport Ave.

There was discussion and determined since it is not residential and they are not subdividing it, they would not have to give up open space.

The Split Rock development (retail) was discussed and that it would be something the Conservation Commission would be involved in especially because of the brook and Far Mill River. Inland Wetlands will monitor the ponds along the perimeter, so that it can be done tastefully, since it will be a gateway to Shelton.

Executive Session – Land Purchases

Tom Harbinson made a motion to go into Executive Session for purposes of discussing potential land purchases at 9:00 P.M. and would like to invite the secretary, Marianne, to stay for the session. Seconded by Regis Dognin. All were in favor, motion passed. At 9:12 P.M. Tom Harbinson made a motion to return to regular session, seconded by Regis Dognin. All were in favor, motion passed.

Trails Report – Tom Harbinson

The second timber bridge by Means brook in Huntington Center is still in process. They are going out to bid for the abutments. We have gotten an assessment of what is left in the Trails accounts from grants. We have provided for a couple of gates at entrances to open space at the Shelton Lakes area where the trail crosses the power lines near Route 108. Another one will be located on Oak Valley Rd. A company called Flat Iron Works, who did the gates at French's Hill, will do this. We will be purchasing a hydraulic dump device for the Gator so that when we are picking up trash so that we don't have to shovel it out. When warm weather comes we will be finishing up on the first timber bridge by doing some plantings and the railing. There is an Eagle Scout project to do a sign kiosk at the first timber bridge. There is another Eagle Scout looking for a project to do a sign kiosk around the Far Mill River where the open space is. There is another Eagle Scout looking for a project and we have not decided where best to use him. Jim Pjura is a good contact for the Eagle Scouts so he can monitor all the projects going on. There have been no work parties during the winter. We will be concentrating on the area around Lane Street and Huntington Woods in the spring. We want to let the people know in Huntington Woods that they have a recreational trail going through the back of their property. Dave Zamba and Tom Harbinson are working on the trails brochure.

Round Table

Regis Dognin said he could give us an update on Constitution Park. It is located at the end of Long Hill Avenue and Constitution Ave. It is at the center of 5 streets. Regis showed the drawing of the plans for the park. It showed the walkway, where the plantings are plus the flagpole. There will be benches plus lighting for the flagpole. There will be no parking at the park. Construction is scheduled to start in March and the opening ceremony will be Memorial Day.

Adjournment

Tom Harbinson made a motion to adjourn at 9:25 P.M. Celeste Beattie seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Chaya
Clerk, Open Space Committee

*A tape is on file at the Town Clerk's office.