



**TOWN OF FAIRFIELD
LAND ACQUISITION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
July 22, 2020**

Present: Michael Widmer, Jeff Galdenzi, Linda Batchelder, Adam Goodman, Kasandra Marshall, Kevin Helmich.

Absent: Tara Hawley, Nick Mirabile, and Trey Bickers

Others Present - Conservation Director Brian Carey and member of the public, Francis Sweeney.

I. Call Meeting to Order

Chair called the meeting to order at 6:05pm via voice-only conference call. Widmer remarked that we had to cancel the March meeting due to the pandemic.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Approval of Minutes

Galdenzi motioned and Batchelder seconded to approve the January 22, 2020 meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Chairman's Report

Widmer expressed condolences for Bob Daly, a board member for 2 years, who recently passed away. Bob brought a lot of experience, information, and ideas to every meeting. He will be missed.

a. Welcome New Members – Kasandra Marshall, Nick Mirabile

Widmer welcomed two new members Kasandra Marshall and Nick Mirabile. The two other new members, Kevin Helmich and Trey Bickers, were welcomed at the last meeting. Widmer commented that it's great we have a full board again, which now includes 2 alternates.

b. Current Vacancies – None!

c. TPZ Plan of Conservation & Development public workshops follow up

The TPZ had public workshops in January and February to assist in updating the local Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), which is reviewed every 10 years for the town to remain eligible for State grants. These workshops help establish goals for open space preservation, conservation, and will be helpful identifying areas of future economic growth/development.

d. State of CT Open Space 2020 Funding

Carey said there is no additional clarity on this funding from the DEEP (Open Space Management Division). Alison Clark is the contact, but 2019 funds have not been reimbursed yet.

V. New Business

a. 3581 Black Rock Turnpike

Widmer reviewed a letter from the adjacent property owner, Mr. MacDonald, who is interested in purchasing this small triangular property. Carey updated us that Mr. MacDonald has a right away over the land and wants to purchase it to attach to his property. Carey said the town doesn't have any use for it, it is not a building lot, and it is not adjacent to open space. Batchelder said the property card suggests it was town owned since the 1800s. Carey said only 1 appraisal (instead of 2) would be necessary because the State is not involved. Carey said the buyer is responsible for the environmental due diligence. Carey suggested the LAC make a favorable or unfavorable motion to get this advanced to the next level to see if the administration is interested. Carey could bring the request and supporting documents to the administration.

Motion: Batchelder motioned to favorably recommend the sale of this property and bring it to the administration's attention. Helmich seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

VI. Old Business

a. 3724 Post Road & 3726 Post Road

Sasquanaug Southport, a charitable organization committed to preserving and protecting Southport and its historical surroundings, recommended the town acquire these two properties for passive open space. Both properties were historically underwater in Bulkley Pond, but are now dry marshland since the earthen dam failed in September 2018. It's possible they can get a grant from the Aspetuck Land Trust to acquire this open space. No taxes will be generated if it is sold to a not for profit organization, but they will have to deal with the outstanding taxes. There could be legal costs for the town, which may be why the town has not motivated to go forward. This property was tabled and Carey said he will have an update at the next meeting in October.

b. 995 South Pine Creek Road

This 0.27-acre property is currently being monitored by CT DEEP. It is an approved building lot adjacent to town-owned open space. Carey provided an update that there is concern with the property because of environmental concerns and the owners were looking for a higher price than the town was willing to pay.

c. 760 Oldfield Road

Fairfield received a State DEEP grant for this property and the transaction closed. Carey is working with the DEEP to get reimbursed. The property was cleaned up in November and has received a donation from the Tucker Fund for the installation of a bird blind. Carey said he is communicating with The Tucker Fund, but the bird blind has not been installed. Previously Widmer and Carey thought that a Spring ribbon cutting ceremony at the bird blind would help bring positive attention to what the LAC and Conservation Department are doing.

d. 145 Grace Street

This 0.11-acre property near the Nutmeg Bowl backs up to open space. The town may re-enter negotiations with the owner of this property after it goes to the RTM for final acceptance. Carey is unsure if we want to take on this parcel, but he first needs to bring it to the RTM.

e. 373 Cross Highway

This 2.21-acre property next to Binger Open Space and Timothy Dwight elementary school was appraised at \$38,000 and is still for sale. Wetlands dominate this property, but it is adjacent to open space. A State DEEP grant could cover 50%. Carey thought it was worth buying for preservation, but he is waiting to see if State funds will be available for the sale.

f. 3250 North Street

This 3.66-acre property abuts Brett Woods, is under transmission lines, has no septic or well, and has wetlands on half the property. Carey said there is no new information about this property and he still doesn't know if State of CT DEEP grants will be available because they haven't been published yet. Widmer thinks this property is a good candidate to add to our open space inventory once there are State funds available.

VII. Adjournment

Batchelder motioned for adjournment and Helmich seconded. Widmer called the meeting at 6:45pm. Next meeting is on October 21, 2020.

Respectively submitted by,

Adam Goodman Secretary, LAC