

Middletown Open Space & Fields Committee

Minutes of Meeting

October 21, 2009

A meeting of the Open Space & Fields Committee took place on Wednesday, October 21, at 6:30 pm at the Middletown Town Hall. The meeting was called to order by Mason Hawes, Chairman.

Present : Cheryl Boergesson, Nicholas Coogan, Eileen Hadfield, Kimberly Kestler, John Pinto, Steve Ponte, Read Saunders and Ralph Thomas, Recording Secretary

Absent: Steve Fagan

Ex-officio Members:

Present: Richard Cambra, Town Council; Dick Adams, Planning Board

Absent: Robert Johnson, Conservation Committee

Agenda

Review and approval of minutes: The minutes of the September 16, 2009 meeting of the committee were approved as submitted. [The minutes of this meeting were approved as amended at the November 18, 2009 meeting.]

Richard Cambra Committee Overview. Mr. Cambra indicated that the committee would be of the most assistance to the Town Council in

carrying out its responsibilities if it focused its work on the following items:

(1) Assessing the value of property that the town was considering acquiring for open space and/or recreation purposes.

(2) Providing advice to the Planning Board on the ongoing review of the Comprehensive Community Plan with regard to land issues, e.g., how many houses should be placed on a property in order to maintain adequate open space.

(3) Providing an evaluation of proposed new developments as to whether adequate open space will be provided under the developer's proposal.

(4) Establishing a stewardship program for existing parks. This could include, e.g., identifying park wardens, recommending the posting of signs, and assessing and bringing to the Town Council's attention proposed park improvements.

(5) Providing input to the development of the town's Master Recreation Plan.

(6) Assisting in the development of a community farming program.

On motion of the Recording Secretary, Ralph Thomas, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to recess this meeting at 7:00 pm and reconvene in executive session.

On motion of the Recording Secretary, Ralph Thomas, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to reconvene this meeting in

open session at 7:40 pm.

On motion of the Recording Secretary, Ralph Thomas, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to seal the minutes of the executive session pursuant to Section 42-46-7, RIGL.

Shawn Brown, Town Administrator, was present for the remainder of the meeting.

Old Business:

- Recreation Master Plan/Comprehensive Community Plan.**
 - o Mr. Cambra advised that the Town had issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) soliciting bids for development of the plan.**
 - o Shawn recommended that the committee should review the Recreation, Conservation and Open Space section of the current Comprehensive Plan and should provide recommendations to the Planning Board for use in the ongoing review of the plan. Ralph indicated he would provide committee members the link to the online plan.**
 - o Nick will advise the committee of the status of the review of the current plan at the November meeting as it impacts recreation and open space.**
- Town Farm. The members agreed that they wanted to explore the feasibility of developing a Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3) status for the Boulevard property as a self-governing, nonprofit**

organization. Eileen agreed to head a group exploring that possibility. The chairman asked that other members following the meeting if they wanted to work with Eileen.

- **Property Updates.** The chairman observed that the appearance of the Town's parks and other properties had improved significantly over the last two months and was now, in general, very good. He expressed his appreciation to Mr. Brown for the work of the Public Works Department.

New Business:

- **Administrator's Updates.**

- o **Property.**

- o **Work was complete on the former Linden School property.**

- o **Except for planting trees along the street and in the new parking area, work was complete on the West Main Road property adjacent to the library.**

- o **At Dunlap-Wheeler Park, the sidewalk and modifications to permit handicapped access were complete, and rosa rugosa planted.**

- o **The pink patio will be removed in 2010.**

- o **The most troublesome situation continued to the condition of Demery Park, with inadequate access, poor maintenance and now its use for riding of horses. He indicated action would soon be taken to improve access and mow portions of the park.**

- o **Citizen Request is a new online management tool that permits town residents to report problems, such as park and field issues, and then**

to receive periodic updates on action taken on the matter. It is accessed through the town web site.

o View Work is a new software program being developed to provide improved management controls within the Public Works Department.

- **Membership Status.** The terms of Cheryl, Eileen and Ralph end in November of this year. Requests for reappointment had to be submitted to the Town Clerk not later than October 23.

- **Election of Officers.** Ralph will review the bylaw procedures for election of officers and provide the results of his review to the committee at its November meeting.

Action Items to Forward to the Town Council: None

Other Business:

- **Parcel # 1.** The chairman observed the town could be viewed as divided into three sections: the first east of East Main Road; the second west of West Main Road, and the third the area between the two roads. He noted that most of the protected land was located east of East Main Road and that there were few park areas in the western portion of the town. He also noted that the only recreation area in the northern portion of the west side of the Town was the playground at Oliphant School. The chairman stated that he was aware that Parcel # 1 located on West Main Road was for sale. The committee asked the Town Administrator to provide information on the property to the

committee at its November meeting.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Ralph Thomas, Recording Secretary