

Columbia Open Space Committee

Regular Meeting

May 15, 2014

Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Ann Dunnack, at 8:10 AM. Joan Hill, Shirley King, Paul Ramsey, Walter Tabor, Chris Tolsdorf, Don Schofield and Ann Dunnack were present.

Guest: Alicia Sullivan, from The Trust for Public Lands

Citizens and town officials: Don Cianci, Rob Hellstrom, Paula Stahl, Carmen Vance, Jonathan Luiz

The minutes from the April meeting were accepted as written.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Paul introduced our guest, Alicia Sullivan from The Trust for Public Lands organization. Ms Sullivan's organization has been involved in helping to raise funds for public acquisitions of 3 million acres nationally as well as 6,000 in Connecticut. This organization provides technical, legal, and funding advice as well as outreach efforts to local groups wishing to preserve lands for public use.

Joan gave an overview of Columbia's Wells Woods area that emphasized the importance of this tract of land. She provided slides showing the varying topographies as well as the property lines and access points. The major issue all agreed is access points for public use.

Discussion took place concerning ongoing town negotiations. Ms Sullivan suggested that the town have an on-going Open Space fund in the budget to facilitate decision making in the future. Another suggestion was the Federal Legacy program which preserves land in large parcels for hunting purposes.

Graham Stevens is the Ct State head of Land Acquisitions and is a source we should be using. Ms Sullivan will also contact him on our behalf. She also will provide

Jonathan with a list of appraisers who specialize in these types of issues.

Ms Sullivan suggested that The Trust for Public Lands can provide Columbia with three suggestions: 1) technical assistance, 2) assistance with negotiations with property owners, 3) assistance in pursuing a bond issue in town.

There would be a fee for technical advice. The Trust pays for appraisals and other fees incurred in the application process.

One last suggestion was that we pursue State grants directly with the head of the State DEEP grant program, David Stygar.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley King, secretary

Received: May 19, 2014.

At 9:10

Attest: Robin M. Keneff

Town Clerk/Assistant Town Clerk