

Town of Columbia
Financial Planning and Allocation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 17, 2019
Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT. 06237

Members Present: Chairman, Earnest Sharpe; Judy Ortiz; Richard Szegda; Kelley Peck; Dean Toepfer, Todd Shepard, Mike Patel.

Also Present: Town Administrator, Mark Walter; Finance Director Bev Ciurylo.

CALL TO ORDER: E. Sharpe called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

1. Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Audience of Citizens: No comments from the audience.

3. Approval of Minutes:

3.1. FiPAC Regular Meeting Minutes of June 19, 2019. R. Szegda MOVED to Approve the June 19, 2019 Regular Meeting Minutes. J. Ortiz SECONDED the MOTION and it CARRIED 4:0 with T. Shepard abstaining.

4. Correspondence: None

5. Old Business: None

6. New Business

6.1. Presentation from Trust for Public Lands and Open Space Committee on The Proposed Columbia Community Forest: M. Walter introduced Honor Lawler, Project Manager and David Wilkens from Trust for Public Land (TPL) . He stated that there will be a Rec Commission presentation to FiPAC in the future.

H. Lawler presented a power point presentation that provided the general overview of Trust for Public Land. TPL's mission is to create parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. H. Lawler provided an overview of TPL's impact in CT since 1972; the impact on communities, and examples of their recent work in Old Saybrook, Wilton, Ridgefield, and Windsor. H. Lawler provided a project overview on an area of nearly 1,000 acres of forestland in Columbia, Lebanon, and Hebron. The forest block contains highly productive wetlands, migratory bird habitat, and a valuable recreational asset for the communities. Made up of nearly a dozen parcels, The Trust for Public Land intends to purchase the properties in partnership with the State and towns to expand Mono Pond State Park and stimulate regional economic development along the Airline State Park Trail. The project attributes include:

- Drains two major watershed basins, Connecticut River and Thames River.
- Connects significant open space including previous state and local investment (local preserved farmland, Mono Pond SP, Salmon River State Forest and Raymond Brook WMA).
- Medium and Low-Density Migratory Bird Stopover sites.
- Within Silvio Conte Boundary.
- Above Average Terrestrial resiliency as mapped by Nature Conservancy.

H. Lawler provided highlights of an expanded state forest in Columbia. The Trust for Public Land is a national leader in the growing “community forest” movement, which, throughout New England, is becoming a powerful tool for residents to protect resources and locally manage forested landscapes.

- Timber harvest revenue to the Town and State (a \$250M economy in CT).
- Strengthening of local economy through creation of a State Park destination and outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Preserve natural goods and services open space, streams and rivers, drinking water supply , and wildlife habitat.
- Motivate community engagement and build social fabric through collaboration as community works together to achieve conservation goals, management committees, educational opportunities, etc.
- Boost local real estate values (enhancement value is important to the local property tax base because it offsets the effects of open space, which may be tax exempt).
- Improved health of resident’s activity levels and access to the outdoors.
- Preserve historic and cultural resources.
- Mitigate climate change (large forested landscapes buffer the effects of large storms, invasive species infestations, stormwater retention and flood control).
- Forest and woodland ecosystems sequester carbon and could provide measurable and potentially lucrative, job creating carbon credits for Connecticut.
- Forests provide habitat for bats which save farmers money on pest control (estimated \$3.7 billion per year in the U.S.).

D. Wilkens stated that there will be fundraiser to raise community-based support on Thursday, September 19th at 5:00 pm at Heartstone Winery.

6.2. Questions and Answers: T. Shepard asked when will the funding will be available. H. Lawler responded that the states money and other grant money will be available in September.

J. Viens asked what the conservation plan is for the proposed state forest/state park and will we know what the uses will be before buying the property. H. Lawler explained that it is dependent on the funding

source and what the town wants to negotiation between the funders and the state.

- 7. Transfers:** R. Szegda MOVED the Transfers as presented by B. Ciurylo. J. Ortiz SECONDED.

TRANSFER #/AMOUNT	FROM A/C# DESCRIPTION	TO A/C# DESCRIPTION
2019-050 / \$704.00	10-4412-120 / Telephone	10-4412-230 / Electricity
2019-053 / \$634.00	10-4412-120 / Telephone	10-4260-230 / Electricity
2019-058 / \$3,425.00	10-4112-040 / Group Insurance	10-4132-010 / Salaries-Assessor
2019-059 / \$1,900.00	10-4112-040 / Group Insurance	10-4260-010 / Salaries-Senior Center
2019-062 / \$550.00	10-4410-630 / Rental	10-4410-600 / Repairs/Maint
2020-003 / \$700.00	10-4260-230 / Electricity	10-4260-515 / Contracted Services

MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

- 8. Next Meeting:** August 21, 2019

- 9. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Real estate per State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(D).** E. Sharped MOVED to enter into Executive Session at 8:10 pm with FiPAC and BOS, Open Space members present, Town Administrator, M. Walter and guests from Trust for Public Land. MOTION CARRIED 5.0. E. Sharpe MOVED to end the Executive Session with no action taken at 8:30 pm. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

- 10. Adjournment:** E. Sharped MOVED to ADJOURN the meeting at 8:31 pm. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully Submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie