

Open Space Stewardship & Policies Work Group
Wednesday, September 6, 2023
4:30 PM- Main Meeting Room, Town Hall
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT

PRESENT: Wendy Mackstutis, Margery Winters, Susan Masino, Erin Leavitt-Smith, and Helen Peterson

ALSO PRESENT: Tom Tyburski, Director of Culture, Parks and Recreation was also in attendance.

Call to Order

Ms. Winters called the meeting to order at 4:32 PM.

1. Adoption of June 7, 2023 Minutes

Ms. Masino made a motion to table the minutes of the June 7, 2023 Open Space subcommittee workgroup meeting as she hasn't had a chance to review. Ms. Leavitt-Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor.

Mr. Tyburski commented that Ms. MacGilpin (Assistant Town Planner) will be joining that a group as a liaison for the Planning and Land Use Department.

2. Discuss/follow up re: POCD

Ms. Leavitt-Smith shared that Open Space's proposed comments on pages 4-5 were put in the document. She stated that the diagram did not get into the POCD as they thought the new page 6 would fit better with sustainability. However, there are aspects of this page throughout the POCD. Ms. Leavitt-Smith shared that the Open Space comments regarding "the advances of European settlers into new areas was resented" was changed to "not welcome". Ms. Winters shared that she felt that wording was worse than previous. On page 15, the Open Space's suggestions to add a paragraph 4 regarding housing was not added as Planning felt that it would be better in housing although they may supplement some of it. On page 20, 21 and 27, a lot of changes were not made. On page 27, under POCD Approach they did add ecological systems. On page 29, Open Space's request for the wording "long term wellbeing and vitality" to be added, those changes were made. On page 29, "protecting natural resources will help Simsbury be more ecologically sustainable" was not deleted, what they put in was "protecting natural resources and enhancing ecological health will help Simsbury be more ecologically sustainable. In Chapter 4, everything in green, Ms. Leavitt-Smith will make the change but it is not in the current draft. The online survey got in. Regarding the water resources, Planning felt it was commentary and not related to protecting the waterway so it did not get put in. Ms. Leavitt-Smith stated a lot of what was in page 34 was already in the draft. On the Action Steps on page 36, there was no change as there was not enough space and the information was included elsewhere. Ms. Masino commented that they she feels they need to be more specific with an action step as a few years ago they passed a law that allows them to enable trap rock ridge legislation.

She stated there is a policy and recommendation in the POCD to put trails on both trap rock ridges. She stated there is already one on the east side and the one on the west side is the only trap rock ridge in the State that doesn't have a trail along it and that means that special things grow there. She is going to recommend deleting that.

Ms. Peterson brought up page 44 and she stated they are waiting for the ecological review. Ms. Masino suggesting putting the wording on this identical to the wording that they have for sustainable Connecticut.

On page 35, Open Space asked to delete "preserving natural resources with help Simsbury be more ecologically sustainable". Ms. Leavitt-Smith stated that that did not get changed. Ms. Masino commented that she added sustainability to that diagram because she thought that is what everyone wanted. On page 36, the last bullet regarding disposal of small parcels, that change was made. Ms. Leavitt-Smith will check to see if Open Space is going to be added to the front of the POCD.

Ms. Masino commented that none of these surveys are statistically valid. IF they haven't done a statistically valid survey, they can't say that this is what the Town wants.

The Open Space recommended additions on page 38 were not made regarding the Open Space plan. The sidebar on page 39 was removed. No changes were made on page 40. On page 42, number 1, a and b were both deleted but they did not replace the text with what Open Space had requested.

In Chapter 6, no change was made as they felt values were implicit throughout the plan. Ms. Leavitt-Smith stated there was no room to make the change to replace the sidebar text "dark skies". They also felt that some of the items put in regarding dark skies were too specific. On page 46, "ponds and wetlands", it was made to be for major water features. On page 49, that change was made. Page 54 and 55, no change. Also, no change to the action steps on page 56. On page 95, Open Space had asked for an action step regarding "develop map with overlay of environmental develop", that did not get changed. No changes were made on page 96. Comments included in the text on page 32 is what Open Space has on page 100. Everything was added on page 132 and 133.

Ms. Leavitt-Smith stated that if there are Open Space comments to send them to Mr. McGregor.

3. Fall Educational Events

Ms. Winters commented that they are planning a Dark Skies event. Also, Pollinator Pathways, Simsbury Land Trust, Open Space and Conservation are teaming up to do a series at the library on light pollution.

4. Invasive Species Discussion

Mr. Tyburski shared that he has been working with the Farmington River Watershed Association as they proposed a project working with the Town where they would grant fund the removal of the bittersweet at the Pinchot Sycamore tree and the right of way along with river there. The plan was to cut with herbicide. Mr. Tyburski put together a wetland's application. He got a call from the Watershed Organization today and they stated they changed their plan and they are just going to go cut now in the fall and in the spring, he is uncertain why the plan changed at this time.

5. Other Business

None

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Taylor
Committee Clerk