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Town of Vernon
Conservation Commission Meeting
Monday, December 21, 2015
7:00pm
Council Chambers, 3rd Floor, 14 Park Place
Rockville / Vernon, CT

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APPROVED MINUTES

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Meeting was called to order at 7:12pm by Chairman Ryan Goad. Present were Commission members Jim Simon and Richard Clark.

Staff Present: Town Planner Marina Rodriguez

Recording secretary: Audrey Lanz

Guests: Open Space Task Force – Ann Letendre, Tom Ouellette, Ginny Gingras and Karl Hasel.

2. Administrative Actions

A. Acceptance of minutes of December 14, 2015 meeting.

A motion to accept the December 14th minutes was made by Commissioner Richard Clark and seconded by Commissioner Jim Simon. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Communications Received

- Chairman Ryan Goad received a letter confirming his commission until 2018

C. Letters sent by Conservation Commission last month

- The Conservation Commission sent a letter to IWC with recommendations on Application (IWC-2015-08).

D. Organizational considerations

None

3. Open Space Program

The Open Space Task Force members Tom Ouellette, Karl Hasel, Ginny Gingras and Ann Letendre gave a presentation on their current activities. They handed out the most recent update of the Open Space Inventory, and a copy of the Open Space Plan from the Vernon POCD.

Jim Simon joined the commission at 7:25 pm.

OSTF member Ginny Gingras, also president of the Tolland Agricultural Center (TAC), reported on acquisition of the Gunther Farm by TAC. TAC has received the grant funding needed to purchase the farm. Five acres are in Vernon, 18 acres are in Tolland.

Ann Letendre gave the commission an update on the Strong Farm property. She explained that the property is comprised of three parcels: (1) the house and barns on 8 acres of land on West St., (2) an 18-acre pasture on West St across from Garden Barn, and (3) a 33-acre pasture on Hartford Tpke. The Open Space Task Force has been working to preserve the two pastures, which total 51 acres. (The Strong Family will continue to own and maintain the house, barns and 8-acres). The OSTF has been working with the Connecticut Farmland Trust (CFT) and other

local organization and volunteers to make with acquisition. Grants have been received by CFT to cover 90% of the purchase price. The pastures will continue to be used for agriculture in the future. Remaining matching funds of \$150,000 are needed to complete the transaction. The Open Space Task Force is leading a fundraising effort to raise the \$150,000 matching funds, and they are asking assistance from the Conservation Commission. Fundraising will start after the holidays.

Chairman Ryan Goad made a motion to assist the Open Space Task Force with acquiring the needed matching funds to complete the purchase of the Strong Farm. Commissioner Jim Simon seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

4. Other Business

A. Bolton Lakes Issues

None

B. Solar power siting

Tabled until next scheduled meeting on 1/11/2016

C. Future Activities

Ways to draw more members

5. Other Goals

Help the Open Space Task Force raise money to purchase the Strong Farm and the Gunther Property.

6. Adjournment

Chairman Ryan Goad made a motion to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Commissioner Richard Clark. Motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Audrey Lanz
Recording Secretary