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# Town of Vernon

## Open Space Task Force

Minutes of Monthly Meeting October 12, 2009

*Meeting Location: Vernon Police Station Community Room, West Road*

**Meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m.**

**Present:** George Arthur, Ann Letendre, Russ Kunz, Tom Ouelette, Ginny Gingras

**Guests:** Nancy Strong, with Cindy Hall & Virgil Buus (Creative Living Community - CLC)

Chip Bellows, Chair of PZC subcommittee for POCD Update

### **1.0 Approval of Minutes –**

Minutes of May 11, 2009 and June 8, 2009 were approved; motion by Letendre, second by Ouelette

### **2.0 Old Business**

#### **2.1 Priority Parcel Preservation:**

**Talcott Property - Talcottville Gorge.** Ann reported that a meeting had been set up in Plymouth with Amy Paterson (Trust for Public Land) and Talcott's attorney in July. The meeting had to be cancelled. No further activity.

#### **Farmland Preservation – Strong Farm**

Nancy Strong discussed the directions that the farm preservation was taking with the Creative Living Community, to plan a 'greenhouse' facility that would adopt programs for the autistic. Cindy Hall and Virgil Buus explained the long term vision for the CLC. That activity would take place in the 6 acres around the barn. The OSTF expressed encouragement for this new direction. Nancy said the future of the other two Strong parcels are undetermined, but consideration of future farm activity use may be more likely, if the CLC initial project is successful. The OSTF will ask Elizabeth Moore to attend an OSTF meeting to discuss grant opportunities, and what source of funding (farmland preservation or open space) makes most sense for the property.

**Petrin Property –** no new activity. George is trying to get Malcolm Barlow and Kim Petrin to meet.

**Tankerhoosen LLC parcel –** no new activity

**Gunther Property –** no new activity

**Additional Open Space Parcel Evaluation –** Parcels in Rockville were discussed, in light of the trail walk grant along West Main St by Parks and Rec. A meeting will be set up with Bruce at the site to discuss. Also – the parcel on Grove St that is in foreclosure by the Town was discussed and would be an addition to the HRLP Plan. The OSTF supports adding lands in both these areas as open space for recreation purpose (HRLP Master Plan).

2.2 Open Space & Farmland Preservation Funding – Ann reported – state funding for farmland preservation survived the state budgets, as did open space funding.

#### **2.3 Conservation Commission Activities**

2.3.1 Mature Tree Regulation – Tom reported that the PZC adopted mature tree regulations at their September meeting, on recommendations and research by the CC.

2.3.2 Tankerhoosen Riparian Clearcutting in Talcottville – No new information – DEP will inspect the site.

2.3.3 Variable-leaved Milfoil at Valley Falls - George Knoecklein was contracted to address the issue; he has completed the field work and pond inspections.

2.3.4 Other – George asked if there had been any additions to the vernal pool data. Tom will raise the question with the CC.

#### **2.4 Update on 2009 Goals**

2.4.1 OSTF Membership – Nothing new.

2.4.1.1.1 Resolution of OSTF status w/ Town, fill vacancies – Nothing new.

2.4.2 Public Education – Our goals include a Town Council presentation, local access presentation, publication of booklet, and articles for Horizon and Reminder. Ann reported that she spoke

with Joe Grabinski about a local access program. He suggested that the OSTF be on his regular show, "Around Town". Ann, George and possibly Karl will appear. It would be taped at one of the open space sites sometime in the spring.

- 2.4.3 Support of Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) – (See new business item below)
- 2.4.4 Sponsorship – hikes, other – nothing new

### **3.0 New Business**

#### **3.1 POCD Update with guest Chip Bellows.**

Mr. Bellows reported that the PZC had interviewed three firms at a PZC meeting, attended by Letendre and Ouelette. The PZC liked the process that the company proposed in formulating the updated plan. The contract was signed Sept 30. The cost is \$114,000, which is relatively low for this work. Use of Vernon GIS expertise enabled the lower cost. A local firm was contracted to conduct a telephone survey. The Subcommittee has also met with other town planners that recently updated their POCD, Tolland, South Windsor, Ellington. A "Charette" will be held November 12<sup>th</sup>, at which they are hoping to get 100 to 200 people to participate. They will also use Facebook to update progress. Mr. Bellows distributed a questionnaire that was prepared for local board commissioners and asked that it be completed by each member of the OSTF and returned by Nov 13<sup>th</sup>. A public meeting will be held in Jan and Feb to seek further public input. The OSTF complimented Mr. Bellows and his committee for the extensive preparation they have done for this plan update.

#### **4.0 Adjournment** – The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Ann Letendre, Co-chairperson**