

RECEIVED
VERNON TOWN CLERK
10 MAR 12 AM 9:14

draft

Town of Vernon

Open Space Task Force



Minutes of Monthly Meeting March 8, 2010

Meeting Location: Vernon Police Station Community Room West Rd

Meeting was called to order at 7:10 P.M.

Present: George Arthur, Ann Letendre, Russ Kunz, Tom Ouelette, Ginny Gingras;
George Arthur presiding; guest, Nancy Strong

A motion to move item 2.1 (Strong Farm) to the first item of discussion was approved, motion by Kunz, second by Ouelette.

The OSTF welcomed Nancy Strong. She provided an update on the current preservation efforts, particularly use of the barn and the acreage surrounding it. She discussed the withdrawal of Creative Living Community from the plans to establish an autistic learning center there, which has found an alternate site that provided living accommodations. The Strongs will continue the turkey operation for another year. They applied for a structural grant from the CT Trust for Historic Preservation to repair the barn roof, and have received pre-approval. They will continue to pursue other opportunities for future preservation. There was no new information on the other two Strong parcels, on West Road (18.3 acres) and Hartford Tnpke (33 acres).

1.0 Approval of Minutes

Minutes of February 8, 2010, draft 2 were approved; motion by Gingras, second by Ouelette.

2.0 Old Business

2.1 Priority Parcel Preservation:

Talcott Property – Talcottville Gorge – Letendre reported discussion with Amy Paterson of TPL regarding applying for OS grant for this round, due May 10, 2010. Amy suggested that we first talk to the Town about willingness to take on ownership and provide matching funds. A re-appraisal would be needed. The OSTF discussed the possibility of considering only the Gorge parcel, which has the least value of the three parcels and is not developable. Ann will discuss next steps with Amy, and will also try to contact John Ward.

Farmland Preservation – Strong Farm (Reported above)]

Petrin property – Arthur reported that he has not yet had a reply from Malcolm Barlow, who had said he would meet with the Petrins to discuss options.

Tankerhoosen LLC Parcel Update – Letendre reported no new information.

Gunther Property – Gingras reported that the TAC is still very interested in purchase, but no further action.

2.0 Old Business

2.1 Priority Parcel Preservation: (cont)

Additional Open Space Parcel Evaluation – The site along the Tankerhoosen River between Tunnel Road and Bolton Road was raised for discussion by Letendre. The recent findings in the environmental assessment done in this area by Rema Ecological Services for PZC applicant, TicketNetwork Forest, and documented in a report dated November 17, 2009, was discussed. In addition to the NDDDB data currently in the area, two additional “Species of Special Concern” were found, one a very large population of eastern pearl shell mussels. Letendre and Ouelette noted that RBV data taken each year in the River at Tunnel Road also shows this area to have the largest number of “most wanted” macroinvertebrates of the five test sites in Vernon. This data is documented in the DEP RBV annual reports and the report prepared by the CRCCD for Vernon. Arthur and Letendre reiterated that the key reason for open space preservation is protection of natural resources. OSTF members reviewed the OS Plan map and found that this site had been missed in the list of Tankerhoosen Greenway parcels in the Plan; the Clark Farm is included, but this commercial parcel was not. Arthur noted that there is a large wetlands on the parcel on the section near the River. Letendre and Arthur noted it was not realistic that the entire commercial parcel could be preserved, but that the lower section should be preserved to protect the resources. A motion was made Kunz, second by Letendre, and unanimously approved, as follows:

“Given the recent findings of Species of Special Concern on parcel #29-0134-00001 at 60 South Frontage Road, and given that this site abuts the Tankerhoosen River and was previously omitted from the Open Space Plan Tankerhoosen Greenway, the Open Space Task Force adds the southerly section (approximately one-third of the total parcel) to the Vernon Open Space Plan to protect resources noted herein.”

The OSTF then checked the map of the parcels along the Tankerhoosen River to be certain that no other important sites had been omitted from the OS Plan Greenway. Four possible small parcels just above the Tankerhoosen Lakes were noted. Arthur will look up property owners to see if they are residences, and will report back to the OSTF.

Letendre noted that the area at the confluence of the Tankerhoosen and Hockanum Rivers should be reviewed for inclusion in the Plan, particularly the area between the two rivers, which is now Golfland. She noted that resources in the area will need to be researched first, and suggested that this parcel be added to the April agenda for further discussion. Arthur noted that RBV data is taken on the Tankerhoosen side of the confluence each year.

2.2 Open Space & Farmland Preservation Funding - Update

2.2.1 Local Funding – no change

2.2.2 State Funding – Letendre reported that there is a budget proposal by Governor Rell to take \$5 M from the Community Investment Act funds. Hearings on the proposal will be held next week

2.3 Conservation Commission Activities –

2.3.1 Variable-leaved Milfoil in Valley Falls Pond –

Ouelette reported on the public meeting sponsored by the Parks and Rec Department and the CC, and held March 4 to discuss Knoecklein study. George Knoecklein presented results and recommendations. Herbicide treatment was the recommended approach for the milfoil infestation at Valley Falls Pond, and for the fanwort and milfoil at Walkers. Those present at the meeting concurred with this approach by a show of hands. An April 6 Town council meeting is tentatively planned to secure funding for the project.

2.3.2 POCD Inputs – Ouelette reported that the CC provided an extensive list of objectives at the PZC Feb. 11 meeting. They were advised by Planimetrics to redefine the objectives in a list of five achievable goals. The CC is currently defining those goals.

2.3.3 Other – Discuss Tankerhoosen Greenway east of Tunnel Road

Letendre suggested that, given the recent NDDDB findings in the area, the CC might want to take on a project to do a natural resource inventory on the Clark Farm, which abuts the Belding Wildlife Management Area. Permission from Mr. Clark would be needed.

2.4 Update on 2009 Goals

2.4.1 OSTF Membership – George Arthur announced that it is time for him to reduce his volunteer hours, which are about 1000 hours a year. He has decided to resign from the OSTF. Members thanked George for his valuable service.

2.4.1.1 Resolution of OSTF status w/ Town, fill vacancies – Letendre noted that the OSTF was down to five regular members. Gingras suggested that the OSTF put a notice in the paper to fill vacancies.

2.4.2 Public Education – Town Council presentation, local access presentation, publication of booklet, articles for Horizon, RR – no further action

2.4.3 Support of Plan of Conservation & Development – Letendre reported that she made the OSTF presentation of the key goals at the Feb. 11 PZC meeting.

2.4.4 Sponsorship – hikes, other? No change at this time

3.0 New Business

3.1 – Discussion – Clark Farm ownership – Arthur reported that the property lists Ed Clark as owner on his latest parcel map from Aaron Nash dated Aug 2008, but that we should check with the assessor for any update. His record shows owner of the Clark house lot of 0.66 Ac is Edward O. Clark, Sr. The 490 farm lot is 23.8 Ac, owner is Edward O. Clark, Sr. Attempts to contact Mr. Clark to discuss preservation options have not been successful.

4.0 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM, motion by Gingras, second by Ouelette.

Respectfully submitted, Ann Letendre, Co-chairperson