



TOWN OF OLD LYME

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OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Minutes – Regular Meeting
September 13, 2023, 5:00 p.m.
Meeting Hall of the Memorial Town Hall

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Gregory Futoma called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.
2. **Attendance:**
Present Board Members: Chair Gregory Futoma, Vice Chair Michael Aurelia, Fred Behringer, Amanda Blair, Andrea Fenton, Evan Griswold (seated as a voting member).
Absent: Secretary Anne Redfield
Guests: Michael Barnes, Teri Lewis
3. **Approval of July 24, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes**
Mike Aurelia made a MOTION to approve the July 24, 2023 special meeting minutes and Fred Behringer SECONDED. DISCUSSION: None. Vote 6 ayes, The MOTION PASSED.
4. **Public Comment**
Michael Barnes asked that a prohibition against fishing at Horseneck Creek Landing be deleted from the Open Space website. There was a discussion regarding maintenance of the property.
5. **Open Space Business**
 - a) Member Recruitment – A voting member and two alternate Open Space Commission positions are vacant. The need to recruit candidates was discussed.
 - b) Land Acquisition – Greg Futoma
 - Efforts to acquire a certain property for open space conservation ended when the owner decided against selling his land at this time.
 - The commission discussed potential acquisitions with the Old Lyme Land Trust during the summer. The trust has reached an agreement to acquire a property in town, and Gregory Futoma asked for approval to write a letter supporting the trust's grant application to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to offset the acquisition's cost. Members consented to the correspondence.
 - Affordable Housing – Open Space met with the Affordable Housing Commission regarding a possible collaborative land acquisition. Affordable Housing is proceeding with plans to develop two building envelopes on the McCulloch Family Open Space for housing. Open Space will participate on a steering committee advising on this process.
 - c) Land Stewards –
 - Michael Aurelia met with Peter Norris and Alex D'Amico regarding stewardship of town open space land. The two will become part-time town employees, each assigned to care for certain town properties on a rotating basis.
 - August Land Steward Report – Peter Norris reported on August work completed on Ames, Bartholomew, Champlain North, Champlain South and McCulloch. Properties are all in excellent shape.
 - d) Ferry Landing Wildlife Refuge Update – Anne Redfield submitted a report on work conducted and planned within the refuge.
 - Consultants will be hired through grant funds to survey various species on the site, develop a plan for future management of invasive species and restoration of native species, and to provide drone imagery of the property.
 - As part of a vendor's application to treat Phragmites on the refuge's pond, a Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDDB) report was received from DEEP outlining steps required to avoid impact to



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- endangered, threatened, and species of special concern.
- e) Horseneck Creek Landing - Fred Behringer.
 - o Discussion of future property work continued.
 - f) Champlain North
 - o Andrea Fenton made a MOTION to approve a potential expenditure of \$2,000 or more if needed to prune the Barbizon Oak for visitor safety. Efforts will be made to complete the work as economically as possible. Amanda Blair SECONDED. DISCUSSION: None. Vote: 6 ayes, The MOTION PASSED.
 - g) Commission File Storage – Plans to establish a cloud storage account just for open space commission digital files will be researched in consultation with the town IT coordinator. Plans are also proceeding to obtain secure storage for hard copy files.
 - h) Lights Out Pledge – Upon a request that the Open Space Commission, the Old Lyme Land Trust, the Conservation Commission, the Connecticut River Gateway Commission and the Roger Tory Peterson Audubon Center support a “Lights Out” pledge to protect birds during the fall migration season, Greg Futoma polled members on their opinion. Members were supportive of the measure to address light pollution. The commission will offer its support to those partners.

6. **Community Outreach** – Andrea Fenton

- a) The commission’s Midsummer Festival participation was re-capped.
- b) September Hikers Happy Hour – A small group joined the hike during a warm afternoon and more folk met at the Old Lyme Inn. The season’s concluding hike in October will be organized by the Old Lyme Land Trust.
- c) Work Parties – The Environmental Community Organization of Lyme Old Lyme High School, with direction from a new faculty advisor, will be available to again assist with various stewardship tasks during the 23-24 school year.

7. **New Business** - None

8. **Adjourn**

Mike Aurelia made a MOTION to adjourn at 7:12 and Andrea Fenton SECONDED. DISCUSSION: None. Vote 6 ayes. The MOTION PASSED.

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne McAuliffe, Clerk