

SOUTH WINDSOR AGRICULTURE, ARTS & NATURE CENTER COMMITTEE

TOWN OF SOUTH WINDSOR

Minutes

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January 8, 2020

South Windsor Public Library – Board Room

1. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:42 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Members Present: Pat Botteron, Open Space Task Force
John Caldwell, Park & Recreation Department
Mary Etter, Director of S. W. Public Library
Ray Favreau, Director of Parks & Recreation
Joseph Kennedy, SWALPAC
Michele Lipe, Director of Planning
Virginia Macro, Historic District Commission
Mayor Andrew Paterna, Town Council
Tim Shepard, South Windsor Land Trust
Janice Snyder, Town Council
Betty Warren, IWA/CC

Members Absent: Stephanie Dexter, Planning & Zoning Commission
Jeff Folger, Senior Environmental Planner
Katie Graham, Park & Recreation Commission
Cesar Lopez, Town Council

3. Approval of Past/Meeting Minutes

Councilor Snyder made a motion to approve the November 13, 2019, and December 11, 2019 minutes. Mrs. Botteron seconded the motion, and they were approved unanimously.

4. Public Input

None

5. Discussion items

Approval of the 2020 Meeting Schedule

Councilor Snyder made a motion to approve the 2020 Meeting Schedule of the South Windsor Agricultural, Arts, and Nature Center Committee. Mrs. Etter seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

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ITEM:

5. Discussion items *(Continued)*

Donation of \$1,000 from the SW Lions Club- Trailhead Marker

Mayor Paterna stated that this item would be on every agenda so the Committee remembers to put their name on a trailhead marker on the property after the trail is established.

Is it Realistic to Move the Red Barn from Burnham Property to Priest Farm?

Mayor Paterna explained that he contacted a company out of Pennsylvania that moves barns. Mayor Paterna stated that he received an estimate of \$90,000 to \$100,000 to move the barn, which does not include the foundation, in one piece instead of taking it down for \$70,000 and putting it back up for \$70,000.

Mrs. Lipe explained that the use of the barn needs to be determined for building code issues.

Mr. Kennedy questioned if the Committee has looked into constructing a new barn? Mayor Paterna explained that there was an estimate of \$50,000 for a much smaller barn.

Mr. Shepard stated that he feels this barn will have to be taken down and reconstructed rather than being moved in one piece. Mrs. Macro informed the Committee that Dudley Farm got 100 volunteers to help reconstruct the barn after it was taken down, which cost \$70,000. Mrs. Lipe stated that she would reach out to John Finguerra, who owns the barns on Buckland Road. Committee members discussed selling pieces of the barn.

Mr. Shepard reminded Committee members that Jeff Folger had suggested that if the school referendum passes, the barn could be used on the school property for school use. Mr. Shepard felt the Committee should wait to see if the referendum passes before deciding what should be done.

Plans for "Opening Up" the Farm Property

Committee members stated they would like to have a workshop to review what the property will be used for. Mr. Shepard suggested that the sheds, trees, and brush be removed from the property. The land should also be cleared and filled in where it is

(Discussion Continued on Next Plan)

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ITEM:

5. Discussion items *(Continued)*

necessary so it can be usable. Mrs. Macro reminded the Committee that there were legal issues about what can and cannot be done on the property. There may be another group in the public that could be incorporated into the project who would have more time to put towards this project. Councilor Snyder stated that the short term action plan would be to do what Mr. Shepard has suggested. A plan should be established to get the property ready for the next step. Mr. Kennedy felt that if the Town receives the farmland restoration grant, it could be used to address the pond on the property, the tile work, and the creation of tillable soil. Mr. Shepard added that he believes the grant is for \$20,000, with the Town having to come up with 10% of the funds for that grant, which this Committee could provide. Mr. Caldwell stated that it is very difficult for Public Works to take care of the property around the house. If a bulldozer were brought in to flatten the land, it would help to clean up the property. The structures can be taken down by Public Works as long as there are no abatement issues.

Committee members then discussed the possibilities of identifying parking on the property and bringing in picnic tables for the public to use after the property has been cleaned up. Also discussed was putting a sign up identifying the property. Mr. Favreau explained that Katie Graham said she would be willing to paint a sign. Mrs. Warren suggested that areas on the property be planted with wildflowers.

Councilor Snyder made a motion approving to have the Park & Recreation Department do clean-up work on the Priest Farm property. Mrs. Warren seconded the motion.

Mayor Paterna added that the clean-up would take place in the central area around the house.

Mayor Paterna called for a vote on the motion; it was approved unanimously.

Mayor Paterna stated that the brush and tree clearing would be taken care of first, and then the Committee can discuss the parking on the property, the trails on the property, and any other items that will be part of this project.

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ITEM:

6. New Business/Additional Discussion Items

Mr. Favreau suggested that the Committee allow a non-profit organization runs the property, but the Town would still own the property. The non-profit (conservancy) would manage and improve the property with full-time staff. The Committee does not have the time to do what we would like to do with the property. The Town Attorney could review how the Town could get into a conservancy situation. The conservancy would create their revenue for this project. Mrs. Macro stated that the Town could not have volunteers go onto the property to do work. Mr. Favreau stated that they can but would have to be supervised. Mrs. Lipe explained that the bond could be changed through a referendum. Mr. Shepard stated that he never had problems as long as the person had insurance. Mayor Paterna stated that at the Massaro Farm, the Town rented the property out for \$1.00 and helped with all of the planning.

Mayor Paterna stated that at the next meeting, the original design for the barn should be reviewed, and if a barn were on the property, the Committee can discuss what the barn would be used for.

Mrs. Lipe said she would provide the link out on the website.

7. Next Meeting/Public Meeting: Wednesday, February 8, 2020, at 5:30 p.m. in the South Windsor Public Library, Board Room.

8. Adjournment

Councilor Snyder made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:22 p.m. Mrs. Botteron seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah W. Reid
Council Clerk