



The Woodbridge Conservation Commission

Special Meeting

February 4, 2017 – 9:30AM

Woodbridge Country Club Property
50 Woodfield Rd
Woodbridge, CT

Minutes

1. Site visit at the Woodbridge Country Club property to walk the pre-existing golf course and consider the open space potential of the property

Commission members present: Jason Morrill, Frank Deleo, Lauren Miller and Joe Dey (selectman representative)

Jason gave an introduction to everyone present outlining the walk. He indicated the commission members would be walking separately from the public and public comments would come at the end of the walk.

The walk took a little under two hours and was roughly 5 miles. Following the walk the commission members offered their observations:

- The property was quite large and open. The terrain was rolling hills with an incredible vista from the center of the property.
- A small meadow on the course demonstrated how the property could look if simply left to nature. The meadow was full of briars and thick with bittersweet vines.
- The maintenance sheds were observed to be in need of tending. There are vines crawling over the buildings and weeds throughout the paved area.
- Canada geese were prevalent in the area of the man-made pond near Johnson road.
- The potential for farming would be extremely difficult given the rolling terrain.

- Should development be attempted massive amounts of earth would need be moved to flatten areas.
- A proper management plan must be developed soon to assure the property does not become impassible or excessively difficult to maintain.

2. Public comments related to the open space potential property

At the conclusion of the walk members of the public offered the following comments:

David Lober – asked for the perspective and opinion of the commission members. He expressed concern for the cost of maintaining the property as it stands or as a golf course. He finds value in the existing buildings and other infrastructure.

Roger Sherman – indicated the town still owns some of the maintenance equipment from the golf operations. The equipment could be used to continue mowing the greens and fairways. He is interested in bringing back golf operations. If the town were to develop the property he is concerned of the amount of time it would take to begin and complete any construction.

Cheryl Lipson – concern of the potential for invasive plants taking over the landscape. She is interested in volunteering to assist with property review and management planning.

Bob Hill – would like a collaborative effort to develop a management plan. He feels the recreation commission has strong interest in the future use of the property.

KellyAnn Carpentier – would like to see a future walk on the property with a pot-luck lunch. Specific invitations could be made to our town's selectmen and those running for election in May 2017.

Jim Urbano – said there are other ways to protect open space. The sale of the property to a private owner could be made with the town holding development rights or other easements. He offered as an example the property at the corner of Center and Pease roads.

That parcel was sold to a private owner with the town holding development rights. He felt there is great value in the buildings and infrastructure to potential buyers.

Sheila McCreven – suggested the town look to the history of the property and change the name. Instead of referring to the property as the “old country club” it could be referred to as a park named after a past owner.

Peter Beltz – is a prior employee of the club and golfer. He indicated the soil and irrigation below the greens and fairways would make it impossible to use for farming. There is purposefully installed drainage in the greens. He also indicated it would be difficult for tall grasses to grow in the current soil conditions.

Joe Dey – outlined costs presented by Billy Casper on upcoming operational and property improvements necessary to run a golf operation such as irrigation replacement and new equipment.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30am.

CC to Woodbridge Town Clerk: townclerk@woodbridgect.org