



TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY

Land Preservation & Open Space Acquisition Commission

MINUTES

Land Preservation & Open Space Acquisition Commission Meeting
Wednesday, July 7, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.
In Person- Upstairs, Shepardson, Upstairs Dining Room

Present: Paul Bialobreski
Jim Lawlor
Ray Pietrorazio
Doug Veillette
Malcolm Todt
Ericka Carrington

Also Present: Katie Burdick, Recording Clerk

Absent: Anne Paolino

1. Call to Order with Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Mr. Veillette with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of April 7, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Todt MOTIONED to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2021 meeting with the following noted spelling corrections; SECONDED by Mr. Pietrorazio. Unanimous approval. Mrs. Carrington abstained due to her absence.

- Typing errors including:
 - Correction of carpenter wasps/wood wasps (bottom of page 1).
 - Correction of shoreline, to sewer line (line 5 of page 2).
 - Correction of duplicate Paul Bialobreski present when absent.

3. Old Business

a.

Mr. Pietrorazio briefed the Commission on the update of Friends of Fenn's Farm status. Mr. Pietrorazio stated they have a PO Box setup and a bank account opened and they plan to tie up a few loose ends at their next Officer Meeting at the end of the month. Mr. Pietrorazio believes they will be able to publicly announce their existence soon with details of their first fundraiser for the cupola. Mr. Pietrorazio stated they have had a few people already reach out to help spread the work load out.

Mr. Pietrorazio stated their estimated goal for the cupola repair is about twelve to fifteen thousand dollars. This is to cover repairs to the cupola itself. They also are anticipating a small percentage for any other unknown costs that they might not be unaware of until they start the

project and really expose any other issues. The groups' fundraising goal is about twenty five thousand dollars to cover the cupola, the roof around the cupola and to replace the weathervane that was stolen.

Mr. Pietrorazio stated he was recently informed that someone has offered to donate a weathervane.

Mr. Veillette inquired if there was a date set for the fundraiser, and Mr. Pietrorazio stated it has yet to be set and will be discussing the steps to make sure they get the word out to town. They would like to get a mailbox mailing out to the town. Mr. Pietrorazio stated the mailing would help inform the town of the group's mission, details of the event, and help recruit volunteers. The mailing has yet to be confirmed and will be discussed in detail at their future meeting.

b.

Mr. Pietrorazio inquired details about the tax exempt entity Mr. Veillette inquired about last meeting.

Mr. Veillette and Mr. Lawlor stated that the tax exempt and the creation of a trust with 501 (c) 3 status would create tax incentive for people to donate property. Mr. Veillette stated as of now, there is no mechanism for people to donate land as a gift with tax incentive beyond the farm. This process had to do with facilitating gifts of property to the Town of Middlebury.

Mr. Lawlor explained that creating a trust with 501 (c) 3 status, this would be possible and there would be two missions, land acquisition and the farm.

Mrs. Carrington questioned how the two entities would differ from the land trust.

Mr. Veillette stated the land trust can say "no" to gift/donation. Mr. Veillette stated he would call and inquire how to work in cooperation with the land trust, to help peruse all interests of both parties instead on working in competition.

Mr. Pietrorazio suggested in the future once we have had these discussions, it would be helpful to develop a publication describing each group and/or commission and what their missions are & how they operate within the town, to avoid of confusion on what purposes each serves.

c.

Mr. Veillette informed the commission the horse barn, (on the house side of it), one of the beams of the doors is starting to sink. He stated it does not appear to be dangerous at this point, but it is something they should have their eye on to address. Mr. Veillette stated he plans to meet and discuss with local contractors that have done work with the town before and the Public Works Department to get accurate estimates and restoration plans for this issue. Mr. Veillette will keep the commission informed with the outcome of their discussions.

d.

Group discussion ensued about planning a Farm Tour Public Access event for the town residents to come and tour Fenn's Farm. The event would be to raise awareness of the Charitable Trust and the beauty and history of Fenn's Farm. The Commission discussed hosting an event in September and October with food, coffee, possible petting zoo and hay rides.

4. New Business

Mr. Veillette informed the Commission that he authorized an \$1800 expenditure for weed whacking at Fenn's Farm under advisement from Robin Fenn. Mr. Veillette inquired how the group felt about setting a monetary limit on his sole approval for expenditures as the Chairman from the LPOS budget.

Mrs. Carrington inquired if the Department of Public works could help with routine and reoccurring expenditures like the weed whacking. Mr. Veillette stated from his understanding it's more of a timing issue, to address the issue when it becomes pertinent instead of waiting for it to go through multiple committees and chains of command to get public works over there to complete it. Mr. Veillette stated he would look into it for more clarification, because the reoccurring expenditures at that property alone annually are approximately \$2,400.00 from the total \$8,000 budget.

Mr. Lawlor suggested getting estimates for the ever increasing items on the "to be done" list. Mr. Lawlor stated that some items will cost more money than the budget allows and this can help plan for the future and getting more important items taken care of as soon as funding allows.

A group discussion ensued of future plans of possibly making Fenn's Farm a working farm with running vo-ag type programs, possibilities of haying the farm themselves and making money to support the program. A tabled discussion for when the commission is planning for ideas for the future of the farm.

5. Public Comments:

None

6. Adjournment

Mr. Todt MOTIONED to ADJOURN the meeting at 7:21 p.m.; SECONDED by Mrs. Carrington. Unanimous approval.

These minutes are submitted subject to approval.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Burdick

Katie Burdick
Recording Clerk