

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 14, 2019, 7:15 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX CONFERENCE ROOM**

PAGE 19-03

Present: Ken Edgar, Chairman; Don Saltzman, Vice Chairman; Jane Connolly, Sally Korsh, Harry Falber, Britta Lerner, Richard Wolf

Also Present: Chris Spaulding, First Selectman; Stephan Grozinger, Selectman; Samantha Nestor, Selectman; Jonathan Luiz, Town Administrator; Tracy Kulikowski, Land Use Director; members of the public

Digitally recorded

7:18 p.m. Chairman Edgar called the meeting to order.

DISCUSSION: REFERRAL FOR CGS SECTION 8-24 REPORT, SALE OF NEARLY 86 ACRES OF TOWN-OWNED LAND OFF UPPER PARISH DRIVE, COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE FROMSON-STRASSLER PROPERTY, TO THE ASPETUCK LAND TRUST; UPPER PARISH DRIVE (TOWN OF WESTON) [19-02]

Chris Spaulding, representing the Town of Weston Board of Selectmen [BOS], came before the Commission to present its request for a CGS Section 8-24 Report on the proposed sale of nearly 86 acres of Town-owned land, commonly known as the Fromson-Strassler property, to The Aspetuck Land Trust [ALT]. Dr. Spaulding stated that the BOS voted at its meeting on December 20, 2018, to refer this matter to the Commission for a CGS 8-24. The history of the property, purchased by the Town in 2003 from developer Howard Fromson, was discussed. An appraisal has been completed. David Brant, Executive Director of The ALT, presented a map and spoke about the ALT's intent to purchase the property through the State's Open Space Grant Program. The members asked questions and a discussion ensued.

The following members of the public spoke:

Tom Failla gave his opinion that the proposed sale of the property to the ALT for the preservation of open space is a good idea.

Stephan Grozinger expressed his confidence that the ALT would be the appropriate steward for ensuring that the land remains valuable conservation space.

Chairman Edgar summarized the process of a referral for a CGS Section 8-24 Report.

Vice Chairman Saltzman asked about including appropriate language in the deed that would have the effect of preserving the land as open space. A discussion ensued. Mr. Brant stated that should the ALT receive the State's Open Space Grant, a condition would be that the ALT is restricted, in perpetuity, from developing the property. Selectman Grozinger stated that the proposed sale is intended to have a deed restriction that would prevent any development of the land and that the ALT, a non-profit organization, is federally mandated, as stated in its bylaws, to preserve and conserve open space.

JAN 14 3:28PM

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 14, 2019, 7:15 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX CONFERENCE ROOM**

PAGE 19-04

CONT'D

Richard Wolf gave his opinion that the timing of this proposal is premature. Mr. Wolf stated that as part of the update to the Town Plan, the consultant's scope of work includes a study of this property for possible future use and that the consultant's study has not yet been completed. Mr. Wolf stated that the proposed sale price of the transaction is important and should be considered. Should the Town proceed with this transaction, he would like the Town to consider retaining several acres off of Upper Parish Drive for possible future land development.

Britta Lerner commented that this property, due to reasons including, but not limited to, steep topography and lack of public water access, may be more conducive to recreational use and Ms. Lerner added that she favors open space.

Harry Falber inquired about the Town's purchase of the land in 2003. Mr. Falber stated that there is value to land that contains a variety of habitats, along with walking and biking trails.

Samantha Nestor, speaking as a resident, stated that this is an opportunity for the property to be put to good use.

Sally Korsh stated that the continued partnership between the Town and the ALT is very valuable to the community. Ms. Korsh indicated that this transaction is a positive way to pursue the Town's open space ideals with recreational opportunities.

Jane Connolly asked about the Town Meeting process, should this proposal move forward.

Chairman Edgar commented that the proposed use of the property is consistent with the Town's existing POCD, which states the importance of open space, and that a majority of the respondents of the 2018 Town Survey favored retaining Town-owned property as open space.

Tom Failla restated his support for this proposal.

Tyler Buckley stated that open space is what influenced him to move to Weston.

Hearing no further comments, Vice Chairman Saltzman made a motion that the Commission close public comment. Seconded by Sally Korsh. All in favor, the motion carried (7-0).

JAN 14 3:28PM

Jane Connolly made a motion that the Commission provide a positive recommendation to the Board of Selectmen on an 8-24 Report with respect to the sale of nearly 86 acres of Town-owned land off Upper Parish Drive, commonly known as the Fromson-Strassler Property, to The Aspetuck Land Trust, Upper Parish Drive, as presented to the Commission. Seconded by Sally Korsh. By a 6-1 vote (opposed: Wolf), motion carried.

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 14, 2019, 7:15 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX CONFERENCE ROOM

PAGE 19-05

DISCUSSION/DECISION: LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE NATURE CONSERVANCY'S GRANT APPLICATION TO THE STATE'S OPEN SPACE AND WATERSHED LAND ACQUISITION GRANT PROGRAM TO PURCHASE A 74-ACRE PARCEL OF LAND AND A 2-ACRE SUBDIVISION LOT, LOCATED OFF OSBORN FARM ROAD AND OLD FARM ROAD

Cynthia Fowx, Preserve Manager for Devil's Den, representing The Nature Conservancy [TNC], came before the Commission to ask for a Letter of Support regarding its application to the State's Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program to purchase the 74-acre privately-held Weston Farms project.

After discussion, Ms. Fowx withdrew The Nature Conservancy's request for a Letter of Support from the Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: JANUARY 7, 2019

Hearing no comments, the Commission accepted the Minutes of January 7, 2019.

Britta Lerner made a motion that the Commission adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Jane Connolly. All in favor, the motion carried, (7-0).

8:30 p.m. Meeting adjourned

Respectfully submitted: AnnMarie Fontana, P&Z Admin. Assistant

JAF 3:28PM