

Wasley Property Committee Minutes for February 11, 2021 7:00 pm

Location: Town Hall meeting room and Zoom

Called to order at 7:06

Present: Tim Angevine, Robert Delayo, Scott Parkhouse, Nathalie Broadhead, Elizabeth Chandler, Kathy Engle-Dulac

Regrets from committee members unable to attend: Josh Tanner and Kathy Newton

Residents in attendance: Tim Garnett, Gigi Garnett, and Dean DiNicola

1. Approval of 1/14/2021 minutes (linked [here](#))
  - a. Change spelling of Herkimer
  - b. Add link to letter
  - c. 4.a.iv.1: printing costs change from \$3,000-4,000 to \$300-400
  - d. Motion to approve minutes with corrections made by Robert, seconded by Scott, approved
2. Any additions to the agenda
  - a. Add discussion of POCD goals
    - i. Moved by Elizabeth, seconded by Scott, approved
  - b. Add public comment as item 6
    - i. Limit to 3 minutes of public comment as per Robert
    - ii. Moved by Nathalie, seconded by Elizabeth, approved
3. Question and answer with Mr. & Mrs. James Garnett in reference to letter to Chairman dated January 15, 2021 (linked [here](#))
  - a. Garnett family has indicated a desire to purchase the Wasley property as it abuts their current home and property
  - b. Would Garnetts be willing to allow public access: privately
    - i. Concerns re: family home for extended family and use of land for golf privately
    - ii. Focus of land use on conservation with regard to agricultural use
    - iii. Not at a point for discussions re: offer/terms (committee does not serve such a function)
    - iv. Heard about committee and entered public comment through committee chair/word of mouth
    - v. Resident has invested money in obtaining professional survey/appraisal privately without town approval, but with prior first selectman's permission
    - vi. Chair inquires if first selectman asked resident if he was interested in purchase; resident uncertain, but believes that resident initiated conversation to seek permission for professional appraisal
4. Discussion of POCD goals (linked [here](#))
  - a. These goals are used as foundational for land trust process for each project
  - b. Six of the seven goals on the POCD doc are addressed by potential uses of Wasley property
    - i. Goals involving attracting young families and providing recreation activities for them, support farming community and farmland preservation,

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as well as reconnection of resident elders to recreational activities; all of which can be addressed on this property

5. Information about process and outcomes of agricultural easement as pertains to Wasley property (additional information linked [here](#) and [here](#))
  - a. Agricultural easements require discussion with pertinent agencies due to individual assets of each property
  - b. Town owns property, but there are no easements in place currently; selling development rights to dept of ag or DEEP for percentage of value of development rights
    - i. Town would continue to own and use the land, but could never develop the land within the boundaries of that easement
    - ii. The payoff amount to the town would be lower than if it were sold to an individual, but town access and use of the property would continue
    - iii. In order to pursue this, the town would have to apply to DoAg (nonbinding) to initiate non-binding process to evaluate which program would be most appropriate for property and what potential value may be
    - iv. If this is a process that the board may want to pursue, the town should file application for nonbinding process early
  - c. Questions:
    - i. Is there an option to limit portions of land for this program possible? Concerns re: "in perpetuity"
      1. Different programs possible through this application, so such options can be pursued
    - ii. How often do towns do this type of thing?
      1. There are types of programs in this docket for use by municipalities, possible that most municipalities do this at the same time as property purchase
      2. Under ag programs, land would always have to be available for agricultural use, percentage of land must be in use, and soil must be of agricultural quality
    - iii. Preservation of house/barn
      1. DofAg has recently come to terms with the need for farmers to have space to live in on these preserved properties, so the current dwelling and barn structures would not be a barrier
    - iv. Difference between "assessed property value" versus "development rights"
    - v. Also concerns about right side of drive on easement property
  - d. Given time constraints of DofAg, it is possible to submit application, or we could engage office in consulting to have rough idea of outcomes possible
    - i. It would be useful to gain access to resident desire for use of property before seeking this information from the DofAg
    - ii. First step in this process would be for the town to submit an application to DofAg

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- iii. Elizabeth can speak with someone at DofAg to find out what that process would look like for the town given some constraints of the property
  - iv. Tim is hesitant to put a process forward without getting notion in front of town selectmen's meeting, possibly in front of a town meeting
- 6. Discussion of word survey document (linked [here](#))
  - a. Pressures of time: we need to get the survey out to town residents
    - i. Town newsletter due to be sent end of April, which feels too far out
    - ii. Potential to send electronically, through paper (printed and/or town newsletter), make phone calls, talk with groups we are part of and collect feedback
    - iii. Mailing of survey would need to be approved by BoS prior to printing if over \$2000, but we will seek approval prior to print anyway for transparency
    - iv. Kathy ED will send word doc to Colleen for printing and approval, then after approval will send to Don at Park and Rec to send link as townwide notice e-blast
    - v. Survey will also go to JoAnne Teidman to post on town website under news/events as well as on the Wasley Property committee section
    - vi. Survey will go out electronically through town website, Park and Rec, and through social media (Google form link)
  - b. Additional research possibilities:
    - i. Develop map for people to put pins with their ideas of what land could be used for
    - ii. Focus groups at fire company, women's auxiliary, library, etc
- 7. Public comment (limited to 3 minutes)
  - a. Jack
    - i. Town is in good financial shape so sale/easements don't make sense to him
      - 1. Ag easements include restrictions on fundraising events?
    - ii. Wished there was snowshoeing going on there, walking trails in summer, do 5K around fields
    - iii. Wished committee was working with Park and Rec to come up with suggestions
- 8. Discuss next month's agenda
  - a. Survey findings to date
  - b. Collaboration with Park and Rec
  - c. Other methods of information collection in light of public health constraints

Adjourned: moved by Robert, seconded by Nathalie, approved at 8:43

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Dear Mr. DeLayo,

My husband Kim and I were longstanding friends with Mr. & Mrs. Wasley. Kim and Mr. Wasley reliably walked the property together, talking about organic gardening, tractors (perhaps their 2nd favorite topic), and Mr. Wasley always gave an update on the bobolinks in their field (his most favorite topic!). Bobolinks are a Species of Special Concern with the CT DEEP. Mr. Wasley's haying schedule was consistently determined by the presence of "their" bobolinks. In good years when the birds would have a 2nd clutch, Mr. Wasley even further delayed mowing until the chicks fledged. Specific habitat required for bobolinks is shrinking annually.

<https://www.middletownpress.com/opinion/article/Robert-Miller-Efforts-to-protect-the-bobolinks-14091413.php>

As a retired critical care nurse, I helped Mrs. Wasley care for her husband shortly after his diagnosis. When my mother relocated from FL to live with us, she and Mrs. Wasley became quick friends at church and at senior activities. As you know, the Wasley's were a humble and happy couple, who were deeply connected to the land and to all the wildlife that lived on the property.

We live in Cornwall Bridge down the hill from Warren. Our intention is simply to share with you one of the most important bird species on the property. The Wasleys considered the bobolinks to be their relatives, and felt it was their responsibility to protect them.

We are confident your committee will arrive at the best ultimate decisions for the Wasley property and for your town.

All best to you and the committee members in your deliberations.

Regards,  
Judy & Kim Herkimer  
Cornwall Bridge

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