

Do You Know About the Beautiful Property on South Park that the Town Owns?

In 2008 Easton purchased 29.5 acres of land bounded by South Park Avenue and the Mill River to prevent a high density development that would have broken our zoning. We paid \$6,150,000 for the property. At the same time, the New England Prayer Center paid the Town \$300,000 for an option to purchase the property for the same price, less the option payment. After several delays, the Prayer Center was unable to complete the purchase and in 2014 all rights went back to the Town. Subsequently, the Board of Selectmen solicited proposals to purchase the property and held public presentations of five proposals but none resulted in a sale. Recently the Board of Selectmen decided to revisit the issue and formed the South Park Advisory Committee (SPAC) with a charge to identify any possible uses for the property and make a recommendation to the Selectmen.

The SPAC has met several times and heard presentations from Planning and Zoning, The Agriculture Commission, Conservation Commission, Aspetuck Land Trust, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, and Trout Unlimited. The Land Trust has submitted a formal proposal to purchase 17.5 acres that involves a potential state grant and requires a non-binding application to be submitted by July 1. In order to fulfill its charge to investigate all possible uses, the Committee has begun developing a list of possibilities. So far they include doing nothing and leaving the property as is, but cleaned up by town, the Land Trust proposal, selling or leasing it to a farmer, single family housing, a solar farm, an education center/use or some form of commercial use.

We now need ideas from the public; in case there is some use of the property we didn't think of. To see what has been looked at so far, you can go to the Town's website, <https://www.eastonct.gov/board-of-selectmen> and see the minutes of all the meetings we have held. The Selectmen are committed to giving the public an opportunity to register your opinions on the use of the South Park property. We are still in the brainstorming/fact-finding stage of the process but also want your ideas/suggestions we may have not yet considered. If you have any suggestions for uses for the property that you would like us to investigate, please email us at SPAC@Eastonct.gov.

Remember, this property belongs to YOU. Thank you for your help.