

TOWN OF EASTON
South Park Advisory Committee
Minutes of Regular Meeting of April 5, 2021

Location: Virtual Meeting via Zoom - access as follows:
https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/I74HmccB05LfNw7_Hp2aAD5sck_ojQoIGiiZEx_h80BwKGTaZ5gWAeG-PPYcp8ny7.2VT0DhqdU9jjUDBj Passcode: LS58T.yo

Meeting ID: 573 146 5822

Password: SPAC0405

Total attendees - members: 9, public 6

1. Call to order 7:16 by John Cunningham, late start due to difficulty with Zoom sign in

Committee Members present: John Cunningham, Tara Sanft, Ross Ogden, Jeff Becker, Elliot Leonard, Andy Kachele, Dwight Senior, Bob Schrage and introduction of new member - Brian Williams.

Members of the public present: June Logie, Grant Monsarrat, Grif Conti, John Meyer, Jeff Parker, Christopher Verni.

2. Discuss and approve Minutes of Meeting of March 1, 2021. John reports that agenda for the meeting was posted later than expected because Town Hall was closed last Friday. Nevertheless, per Town Clerk this is an official meeting. Motion by Andy K to approve minutes of last meeting, 2nd by Elliot Leonard

Vote to approve minutes unanimously approved.

Per Andy read each point of the meeting agenda and the agenda was approved unanimously for the meeting.

3. Public Comment
In reply to request from Grant M., Brian Williams reports his address is 24 Ridley Road.
4. Discussion of communication received

Andy K reports receiving email from A. Marini. Mr Marini expressed interest in learning more about the property. Andy to forward communication to John for follow-up.

A second email (from Dori Wolen) re the referendum was erroneously received in the SPAC mailbox.

5. Old Business:

Updates from Committee Members re investigations

1. Solar Farm – Bob Schrage reports nothing new about the solar farm; same report from Andy K.
2. Ag application – Grif Conti & Jeff Becker will discuss the hemp farm in New Business. Also, expect contribution from Chris Verni.
3. Educational Nature Center – Nothing new to report
4. Preserve and protect – Dwight Senior – discussion by Dwight of gas lines under the property. Dwight is happy to have received a map from Ross. He is waiting for Peter Neary the fire marshal to reply. Also, discussion of clean up cost \$3000 to \$5000 hasn't changed. There is a need for an excavator with a thumb attachment. Per Andy, the Town does not have that piece of excavating equipment and the 300 foot blast zone is about not doing any blasting within 300 feet of the gas line.
5. Residential development – Ross has done more research and is still waiting for Broker's opinion of value. There are some comps from Bethel about residential property with a large house and 24 acres.
6. Commercial development – Elliot Leonard reports nothing new about commercial use for the property.
7. Status of modified Blaze Proposal – Andy Kachele has not received anything new from the Blazes. The ball is in their court. Not clear how much acreage the NEPC needs. The Blazes have a hand sketch of the boundaries for their property. Suggested that the Blazes should get a copy of the ALT map to compare boundaries. Need to know what the NEPC wants and make a financial offer.

6. New Business:

- a. Discussion of additional contacts and investigations: Jeff Becker reports about the possibility of using the property or part of the property to grow high quality hemp. The concept would be to pilot a hemp field on one acre for a tryout.
- b. One question is whether the hemp farmer should be a resident.
- c. Discussion addressed how close should the farm be to the prayer center building and the Mill River?
- d. Andy noted there is already hemp being grown in Easton. He talked with Chief Doyle about thieves going on to hemp farm. Also the smell of hemp is strong and hard to get it out of clothing.
- e. Mr. Becker noted the state license to grow hemp does not have a restriction due to smell of product.

- f. Mr. Conti – 1000 plants on one acre – raise premium CBD flowers – working with a Yale U researcher.
- g. Mr. Conti and Mr. Christopher Verni, co owner of North West Cultivation in Sharon CT. Chris added information about the process of growing hemp plants.
- h. Mr. Leonard says a pilot program will take a year to complete going through next winter. Mr. Conti says the first sales will be in October. Mr. Becker offers that under ideal circumstances the farm could produce \$300K in revenue. Costs were undefined but will include buying the plants to put in the ground, consultation of North West Cultivation, fuel for the tractor, and harvesting and processing flower. Arrangement with the Town were not defined.
- i. Tara asks for identity of the principal investigator from Yale working with the hemp project. The name mentioned is Kevin Gallagher.
- j. With respect to concerns about theft, Mr. Becker says cameras will at as a deterrent and per Chris V., cameras are not very expensive.
- k. Reference was made by Mr Becker, Chris and Mr Conti that other CT towns have already embarked on a similar venture.
- l. Cunningham suggested – Mr Becker, Mr Conti and Chris could use the information from the meeting tonight combined with proposals produced for farms in other CT towns to develop a written proposal defining a project and proposal for the Town to review. Ahead of submission to the Town, SPAC is open to reviewing said proposal.
- m. Dwight says there are no other proposals on the table for South Park so this one would not be competing with any other possible use.

Public comment

- a) Grant M comments that the level of discussion asking for more specifics re hemp farming concept should be applied to the proposed sidewalk on Sport Hill.
 - b) John Meyer of 18 Lantern Hill Road
Thanks for the presentation. Suggests an alternative site for hemp farming maybe Samuel Staples school property.
7. Plan for next period: next meeting will be the 1st Monday of May which is May 3.
 8. Adjournment Unanimous at 9:12.