

**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
TOWN OF NEEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS**

**Minutes of Public Hearing with Board of Selectmen
October 13, 2009**

Present: Jane Howard – Chairman, Brian Nadler, John Comando, Bruce Eisenhut, Paul Siegenthaler, Sheila Pransky

Absent: Jack Cogswell, Janet Bernardo, Mark Gluesing,
Patricia Carey - Staff Liaison

Town Staff: Nicole DiCicco - Recording Secretary

Board of Selectmen: Dan Matthews – Chairman, John Bulian, Denise Garlick, Moe Handel, Gerald Wasserman, Kate Fitzpatrick - Town Manager

Guests: Lisa Standley – Chair of Conservation Commission
Belinda Carroll-Krawiecki
Andy Young
Rob Pisano
Mark Rielly
Allegra Lowitt

The Public Hearing convened at 7:10 PM in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Town Hall.

Board of Selectman Chairman's Comments: Board of Selectmen Chairman Dan Matthews began by introducing the Community Preservation Committee and the background on the parcels up for purchase from Standish Farm Realty, LLC. He described the background of the tax laws on agricultural land and how both the Board of Selectmen and the Community Preservation Committee must hold a public hearing and vote on the purchase in order to commit funds to the project, which has a 120 day timeline from the initial notification.

Proposal Presentation: Community Preservation Chairman Jane Howard started with a basic background on the parcel purchase: The proposals for the Volante land purchase came before the Community Preservation Committee on September 9, 2009. The combined purchase of both Lot 1 (Carol Rd.) and Lot 2 (Brewster Dr.) would cost the Community Preservation Committee \$920,000.000. Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick described the 2 parcels up for purchase, owned by Alfred Volante, are known as Parcels 11 and 12 on Assessors map 211 (named Lots 1 and 2 for the purpose of this purchase.) and under Chapter 60-1a of tax law, the owners were provided favorable tax treatment by the Town as the property was labeled as agricultural property. It is this tax break that allows the Town of Needham to have the first chance to purchase the land when it comes

up for sale. There are many rules involved in this purchasing process, with the most prominent being the 120 day limit for the Town to decide and move forward with the purchase. Ms. Fitzpatrick recommends this purchase as the parcels abut Town-owned properties in the Great Plain Ave. / Central Ave. area of Town in which the largest areas of conservation land and open space are already owned, but lack proper connections and easements to create uninterrupted space. This land would also create an ideal buffer between the RTS and existing neighborhood. Finally the current trail plan will also greatly benefit from ownership of these plots rather than just having easements which are more restricting. Mr. Matthews welcomed comments from those in attendance.

Proposal Discussion: Selectman Denise Garlick noted that the recent citizens' survey listed preservation and purchase of open space as a high priority. Conservation Commission Chair Lisa Standley stated the Conservation Commission's support for the purchase. They deliberated several times over the importance of the properties to open trails plan and decided that as a buffer between the Town landfill, residents and wetlands these properties would preserve a beautiful aspect of a neighborhood. Belinda Carroll-Krawiecki (664 Greendale Ave.) noted her concern about purchasing additional parcels of land in western Needham, as opposed to putting a priority on sections of Town with less open space, including along Greendale Avenue. Andy Young (91 Brewster Dr.) noted his support, as a neighbor, for the purchase, and that other neighbors had expressed support for the purchases, too. Mr. Eisenhut asked Dr. Standley if one parcel was more valuable to the Conservation Commission than the other. Dr. Standley stated that both parcels had important attributes.

Rob Pisano, (29 Gaffney Rd., Dedham, MA 02026) as the original party interested in purchasing Lot 1 (Carol Road) made a proposal to donate 2.75 acres of wetlands on his property back to the Town for whatever use it saw fit as long as he could build his home on the remaining one acre. Mr. Pisano raised a concern that he was able to move so far in the purchase process before the Town expressed interest in purchasing the property. Mr. Matthews stated that the Board of Selectmen was notified of the interest in the sale of land in August, and has responded promptly on the interest to purchase the two parcels. Mr. Comando asked if bonding the purchase would interfere with any future bonding projects. Ms. Fitzpatrick stated that other projects would still be bonded within the Town's policies. Mark Rielly (121 Newell Ave.) and Allegra Lowitt (66 Brewster Dr.) were both in support of the purchases and for use in the trails systems.

Adjournment: The public hearing concluded at 7:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DiCicco, Recording Secretary