

Land Acquisition Fund Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
July 18, 2012

Attendees:

Andrea O'Connor	Marge Josephson
Al Kenney	Neil Volkmar
Colette Shulman	Fran Frattini
Jerry Siegel	Laura Pettinato, Clerk

Chairman Andrea O'Connor called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

I. Review of Minutes:

Meeting of May 16, 2012: Marge thinks long minutes are unacceptable – so in retrospect, these minutes will be shortened. Approval will be tabled until the August meeting.

Meeting of June 20, 2012: Marge moves approval, with one correction – criteria number 10, which was a combined value. Previous numbers could be removed. Fran seconds, all in favor.

II. Refining the property rating scale: The Board works with three sheets filled in since the last meeting. These sheets were designed for the purpose of valuing and prioritizing certain properties in Town based on designated criteria which are assigned point values between 0-9, with a total maximum score of 75.

RESULTS FROM THREE FILLED IN GRIDS

	<u>Grid #1</u>	<u>Grid#2</u>	<u>Grid#3 (x's assigned #'s)</u>
Eastman	0	11	44
Mosenthal	0	28	44
Former Rhodes	43	31	58
White	27	34	55
Youngwood	0	0	29
Farview	52	34	64
Yassky	0	15	27
Maharg	23	9	27
McGoldrick	39	0	63
Josephson	22	0	72
O'Dowd	0	0	0
Korsant	42	60	68
Schneckenburger	29	11	70
Cook	0	0	35
Jones	24	0	35
L.Rogers	43	0	59
Bailey	0	0	33
Heald	48	51	61

Hatfield	0	0	36
Timber Trails/Mauweehoo	27	52	47
Right Here IMA	0	0	41
Great Hollow	43	29	54
Timber Trails Associates	42	54	66
Wriston	42	26	54
CLP Islands	33	0	38
Chapel Hill	40	11	28

The properties are not being compared to each other. The basis of evaluation is whether or not the property has the particular criteria, and each parcel is evaluated within itself. The goal of this whole process is to purchase properties that preserve characteristics and slow development. In the future, when the Board finds a property they want to buy, they will have to bring a proposal of hard data to the Town, and they will have to defend their recommendations. It is suggested that a professional will take the criteria keys and provide some means of measuring them and to what degree they exist on the properties that are being proposed. In addition, when grants are applied for detailed information is required.

It is suggested that the current criteria might not adequately contain separate criteria for forest, whether or not the property is affordable for purchase, and uniqueness. However, it is noted that the criteria can't be used rigidly, but rather as a means of validation testing. The Board concludes that applying the criteria to properties purchased in the past can provide key insight into how well this evaluation system may work. The Board members will rate Munch Meadows, Happy Acres Farm, and Towner Hill Property according to the grid. Al will send forms to all members with these three additional past properties for criteria rating.

It is noted that historically, the purpose of the L.A.F. was to slow development. The values Naromi was looking for in a certain piece of property were not the same as what the Town was looking at in the property. There was more developmental pressure in the past. Now, the public may not be seeing the development potential as the highest priority. The criteria now may have worked or may not have worked in the past – the outcomes may or may not have been different. It is also noted that the Town might not have to outright own properties, but could also support properties. Down the road, the weight on the criteria can change.

The Board also decides to comprise a file on each of the properties, which could include a detailed paragraph about each property and the value as the Board perceives it. The Board could also seek input from property owners on this information. This would include information like current conservation status, historical value, and natural resource values. The file could build a picture of each of the properties to prepare for the scenario of selling a particular proposal to the Town. This can help to document the visions about what the Board wants to preserve. The Bicentennial Booklet may contain helpful information, and the Historical Society might be able to provide information as well. Also, a website on Connecticut has information about places in Sherman and mentions some of the properties being evaluated. This resource is <http://www.nynjctbotany.org/conntofc.html>

It is noted that some of these properties already have portions that are protected, and the owners of these properties might be more amenable to the Board purchasing an easement. The Heald property has a 47 acre easement on it, but there is still land around it that could be developed. If

some of these properties have some degree of protection, this could reduce somewhat the need to be protected. It is suggested that these be the types of points put into file footnotes. Andrea notes that a student intern once compiled some of this information on discs, and Ruth Byrnes is in the process of trying to locate this information.

Andrea notes that the Board was created by Town Meeting under an enabling statute of the state, and it really wasn't fleshed out why. This gives the Board some flexibility. Under the operating guidelines, a special fund was created for the protection of Sherman's natural resources and rural character. It is the rural character that people associate with slowing development. This means the Board is acting within their guidelines with the proposed criteria rating system.

Marge will distribute information to the other Board members about a new website that has information like natural resources, prime agricultural lands, and overlay characteristics in one place.

The location of proposed affordable senior housing was discussed. Andrea relayed her understanding of the project and the history of the land. This is affordable senior housing for anyone who qualifies (Federal Law prohibits discrimination in housing), and there are rating scales that would permit preference for local residents. The Governor and Legislature have put aside \$300 million to support affordable housing initiatives in CT. The proposed housing might be a mix of affordable units and market rate units. The builder would go out to bid, and a housing trust would then solicit the grants and the architectural proposals, etc. The Murphy property has a "floating easement" on it. Carol Havens (Town Clerk) told Andrea that no easement was ever filed. There is a need to research now if there is an easement. Fran offers recollection and insight on the land as being two separate pieces of property when it was proposed. Park & Rec had wanted to preserve less property, but the people in Town wanted a larger piece preserved, specifically the area behind the soccer fields where the trails are. A question exists as to where road access would be for such a project, and Cedar Lane is suggested. Fran believes she may have a map(s) in her attic, and she can check to see if they are there. Maps were also put in a box, which might be in the Town Hall attic or Old Town Hall.

III. Public Comment: No members of the public are present for comment.

VI. Adjournment: Neil moves to adjourn the July 18, 2012 meeting of the Land Acquisition Fund Advisory Board, Jerry seconds, all voting in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m. August 15, 2012 will be the next meeting date.

Respectfully Submitted

Prepared by,



Al Kenney, Secretary

Laura J. Pettinato, Clerk

These minutes are not considered official until they have been approved at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Land Acquisition Fund Advisory Board.