

## 03/23/2006 Special Town Meeting Minutes

### MINUTES OF SPECIAL TOWN MEETING OF THE TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON HELD JUNE 23, 2006

A special town meeting of the electors and citizens qualified to vote in town meetings of the Town of East Hampton, Connecticut, was held at the East Hampton High School, North Maple Street in East Hampton, Connecticut on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of June at 7:00 p.m.

Ms. Sharon Smith was Moderator of the meeting and Sandra M. Wieleba was the Town Clerk.

The Clerk read the notice for the meeting which was published in The Rivereast on June 16, 2006, and which is recorded in these records immediately preceding these minutes.

The Moderator requested that the resolution prepared for this item be presented.

The reports of the Town Council and the Board of Finance were presented that this Town Meeting approves and appropriates \$525,000 for costs with respect to the acquisition of 2 parcels of land consisting of approximately 35.03 acres known as a portion of Map 13, Block 22, Lot 1 with frontage on Hog Hill Road and Terp Road and approximately .89 acres known as Map 6, Block 14, Lot T-1 on Terp Road, which are adjacent to and/or border Town owned property to the northeast, and other improvements thereon and the appurtenances thereto, now or formerly owned by Ann Walters; and that the Town appropriate \$525,000 from undesignated, unencumbered General Fund balance to finance the appropriation. The appropriation may be spent for title insurance, broker's fees, adjustments and closing expenses, legal fees and administrative costs related to the acquisition."

Ms. Walck moved to accept the call of the meeting, seconded by Mr. Johnson. Moderator Sharon Smith called for a vote and the call was accepted.

Moderator Sharon Smith requested that the resolution prepared for this item be presented.

Ms. Walck presented the following resolution "RESOLVED that this Town Meeting approves and appropriates \$525,000 for costs with respect to the acquisition of 2 parcels of land consisting of approximately 35.03 acres known as a portion of Map 13, Block 22, Lot 1 with frontage on Hog Hill Rod and Terp Road and approximately .89 acres known as Map 6, Block 14, Lot T-1 on Terp Road, which are adjacent to and/or border Town owned property to the northeast, and other improvements thereon and the appurtenances thereto, now or formerly owned by Ann Walters; and that the Town appropriate \$525,000 from undesignated, unencumbered General Fund balance to finance the appropriation. The appropriation may be spent for title insurance, broker's fees, adjustments and closing expenses, legal fees and administrative costs related to the acquisition", seconded by Mr. Robert Berlin.

Moderator Sharon Smith called for discussion.

Mr. Alan Bergren explained the location of the property this evening and referred to a map which was displayed in the lobby. He further stated that the intent was to preserve this property as open space and protect it from future development due to its location to the Pine Brook aquifer which abuts Pine Brook. Mr. Bergren stated that in order to comply with the necessary requirements this issued had to come before the Planning and Zoning Commission, Inland/Wetlands Commission, the Conservation Commission, Park and Recreation Advisory Board, Board of Finance and Town Council and receive their approval. All of these boards have reviewed and approved this appropriation which is consistent with the town's Plan of Development. The town is in the process of applying to the State Department of Environmental Protection for partial grant funding to assist with this proposed acquisition. Mr. Bergren further stated that one of the requirements for applying for partial grant funding was to have two appraisals done on this property. One appraisal has been done and the town was waiting for the second appraisal. If the town passes this resolution it could receive up to 65% funding from the State. The Department of Environmental Protection will write the grant after all the approvals were in place. He further stated that a purchase and sales agreement with the property owner stipulates that if the town were unable to obtain funding the town would not be required to purchase the land.

Ms. Ruth Plummer explained that the purchase of these two parcels of land would be used for open space to preserve the land for wildlife, a wildlife corridor, passive recreation - hiking trails, etc. and to protect the existing Pine Brook Corridor and Pine Brook Aquifer. She further stated that one of the criteria's was that the property was located

in a Class 1 watershed area and linked to the aquifer. The property was also made up of 5% wetlands with the remainder of the property being used for trails and open space. In order to be eligible for a grant the town had to have two yellow book appraisals and an A-2 survey done. This acquisition complies with the Plan of Conservation, Plan of Development, State Plan of Conservation and Regional Plan of Development. The town was waiting for the second appraisal. The town will be notified of the final ruling in September, 2006.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

George Coshow, 20 Shipyard Road stated that he supports open space; however, he did not support this acquisition in light of the fact that the town had not been able to pass a budget for 2006-2007. He also felt that the town did not identify a plan and felt that this issue should be voted at a referendum rather than at a town meeting

James O'Sullivan, 50 Main Street, did not support this acquisition for the same reason stated by Mr. Coshow. He felt that this purchase was a want rather than a need for the town. He asked (1) what the asking price was for this parcel; (2) how the land would be used; and (3) what if the two appraisals were not consistent with regard to the value of the property. He suggested tabling this issue until we passed a budget and a plan defined.

Kyle Dostaler, 56 William Drive, spoke in support of this acquisition and the need to vote on this issue tonight due to the deadline for filing the necessary paperwork with the State. He mentioned that this was not an emergency vote as indicated on signs posted throughout the town and that this acquisition was discussed at their council meetings and other town meetings. He mentioned that if the Town was serious about managing and protecting open space it would approve this acquisition.

Peter Aarrestad, 21 Bay Road, indicated that he supported the 65% matching grant for open space and supports preserving open space. He further stated that he would like to see this decision made without politics.

Ruth Plummer, 22 South Main Street, indicated that the first appraisal stated that the market value for the property was \$500,000.

Beth Angel, 34 Country Lane, spoke in support of this resolution. She pointed out that open space would reduce the need for services which were costly to the taxpayers. She mentioned that many parcels of land which should have been purchased for open space, but were sold to developers such as Royal Oaks Seven Hills, Mallard Cove, etc.

Stuart Winkist, 11 South Main Street, spoke in support of this resolution and the potential to receive 65% grant funding. He pointed out that if the town did not protect its open space that in 50 years it would be too late.

Ruth Plummer, 22 South Main Street, mentioned the need for a safe water supply and that Pine Brook was a high quality stream free of contaminants. She further stated that the second appraisal was expected either Monday or Tuesday.

Linda Ursin, 32 Jacobson Farm Road, mentioned that the maximum number of houses that could be built on this piece of property would be five. She stated that she supported open space, but did not support this resolution.

Maryann Dostaler, 56 William Drive, spoke in support of this resolution. She mentioned that the State had expressed its support by matching funds up to 65%. She also mentioned that this issue had been discussed by the Board of Finance, Park and Recreation Advisory Board, Conservation Commission and Inland/Wetlands Commission and that each board had unanimously supported this acquisition.

Linda Glaude, Hog Hill Road, spoke in favor of this acquisition and mentioned that the property abutted her property.

Don Coolican, 18 West Lane, mentioned that East Hampton had open space and did not support this acquisition.

Peter Brown, 76 Barton Hill, felt that this was a want and not a need for East Hampton. He pointed out the need to purchase land for a new school in the near future and felt that these funds could be better used for this purpose. He mentioned that the town did nothing to purchase the fireman's grounds, which was recently offered for open space. He also stated that 51% of the town was open space and felt that a vote should be held after the second appraisal and a budget passed.

Cindy Root, 16 Bracken Farm Drive, mentioned that the aquifer was not polluted and that the land was located in the recharge. She supported purchasing this property for open space.

Thomas Wells, 42 North Main Street, stated that the Plan of Development supported acquiring this area as open space.

Robert Heidel, 15 Huckleberry Acres, mentioned conflicting reports concerning the environment and ability of this area to be used as an aquifer for the town. He did not support this resolution. He also disputed the costs for providing services if this property were developed on.

Kimberly Fontaine, Railroad Avenue, mentioned that many people in the audience had never attended a Town Council or Board of Finance meeting as she had. She also mentioned that trails would still need to be maintained which meant services for the upkeep of the property. She did not support cutting existing budgets such as the Board of Education and did not support this acquisition because the town did not have a budget or a water system in place. She supported tabling this issue until the budget was passed.

Fran Kline, spoke in support of this purchase.

Fred Hansen, 2 Keighley Pond Road, stressed the need for a water system and felt that this and passing a budget were more important than approving this acquisition.

No further discussion was made and Moderator Sharon Smith closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

Moderator Sharon Smith called for a vote on the question. Both a hand and voice vote could not determine the outcome of the vote.

Mr. Robert McKinney made a motion to vote using paper ballots. This motion was seconded and approved.

Mr. Robert McKinney made a motion to have three checkers with a residency of 25 years is appointed to oversee the issuing of ballots. This motion was seconded and approved.

Mr. Robert McKinney made a motion to begin the voting in a single line starting on the right side of the auditorium. This motion was seconded and approved.

The foregoing resolution was approved by paper ballot. A total of 229 ballots were cast.

119 "YES" Votes

110 "NO" Votes

The Resolution passed.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Town and a motion by Mr. Bergren seconded by Ms. Walck and voted to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Sandra Wieleba, Town Clerk