

## June 16, 2004

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE **Present:** Patti Doran, Elaine Luckey, Susan Payne, Chick Treadway, Dan Sherr, Colleen Weston, Diane Williams

**Guests:** First Selectman Dick Sears, Press

The meeting was called to order at 5:00pm.

**MOTION: to accept the minutes of the May 19, 2004 was made by Mr. Sherr, seconded by Ms. Doran and passed unanimously.**

Dan Sherr began the meeting by summarizing the events to date of the Open Space Committee. Members have interviewed various townspeople; Mr. Sherr correlated the responses into summary form which all members have received. The last page of the summary was information that Mr. Sherr inserted about "Communication with the Community about Housing and Open Space". Mr. Sherr went on to say that the next step should be to identify (12) themes from the summary to drive focus groups. People need to know how open space becomes open space and how it remains open space. Susan Payne identified open space as: **Open Space shall consist of land permanently preserved for agriculture, forestry, recreation, wildlife habitat, natural resources conservation, maintenance of community character or as undeveloped land.** This is the definition used for The Open Space Steering Committee Final Report, Open Space Plan and The 2003 Plan of Conservation and Development. Mr. Sherr asked for feed back from his summary, everyone present was very pleased with his correlation of the responses to the questions. Mr. Sears brought up the point that the public has very different thoughts on open space; Chick Treadway added that people need to understand the effects of open space. Colleen Wesson interjected that you don't want economics to dictate where open space is; more open space where the wealthy live. Patti Doran agreed that open space should be woven throughout town. Smaller parcels can lead to larger tracks. Mr. Sears said the key is to manage growth; growth is coming you can't stop it but you can manage it.

Mr. Sherr's question is: who will do the work? There is a huge responsibility and cost to acquiring and maintaining open space. Elaine Luckey offered that state statute allows for a Housing Authority, perhaps we could create an Open Space Authority. Ms. Payne informed members that the statues allow the Conservation Commission to acquire open space and a fund has been set up to deposit funding into but she feels that before we get to the who and how we need to know if people want more open space.

At this point Mr. Sears mentioned that the Housing Subcommittee is beyond the question of "Do we need it?" He feels the Housing Committee is ready to move on.

Mr. Sherr offered to table the focus group idea and move ahead to putting together meetings that would cover the three main ideas 1) does the public care about open space 2) how much open space is enough 3) funding for open space. After much discussion it was decided that Mr. Sherr will contact the Salem Covenant Church about holding a meeting there and he will also contact organizations in town to spark interest in attending the meeting.

At the July meeting of the Open Space Committee members will work on the frame work for the presentation, which will be in the fall.

Meeting adjourned at 6:48pm.

Next scheduled meeting of the Open Space committee is July 21, 2004 at 5:00pm.

Submitted subject to approval,

Pamela L. Osborne, Secretary