

TOWN OF COLUMBIA
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, September 18, 2024 – 6:30 pm
Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT

A Special Town Meeting of the duly qualified electors and voters of the Town of Columbia, Connecticut and any other persons entitled to vote upon any of the matters contained in this warning are hereby notified to meet in the Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room, 323 Route 87, Columbia, CT on Tuesday, June 18, 2024 at 6:45 p.m.

Present: Judy Ortiz, Deputy Selectman; William O'Brien, Selectman; Chris Lent, Selectman; L. Napolitano, Selectman (arrived at 6:37pm).

Members Absent: Steven M. Everett, First Selectman.

Present Remotely: N/A

Moderator: Millie Ramsey.

Clerk: Jennifer C. LaVoie

Citizens: Ann Dunnack, Tom McGrath, Gail McGrath, Joan Hill, Paul Ramsey, Chris Tolsdorf, Kathy Tolsdorf, Justin Reindeau, Pat Shimchick, Paul Kordonowy, Kim Kordonowy.

The meeting was called to order by J. Ortiz at 6:30pm.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The Moderator read the legal advertisement from The Chronicle. J. Ortiz made the following Motion:

CLAUSE 1: J. Ortiz MOVED to appropriate \$44,680.00 from the Open Space Land Acquisition Account #20-6388-013 to be applied toward the purchase of that certain piece or parcel of land in the Town of Columbia, consisting of approximately 22.92 acres of open space land located at 330 Route 66, subject to negotiation of an acceptable access easement with the State Department of Transportation, and the simultaneous conveyance to the seller of an 0.58 acre easement parcel currently owned by the Town of Columbia. C. Lent SECONDED the MOTION. C. Lent MOVED to add to Clause 1 is contingent approval of appropriation of funds by friendly amendment. The friendly amendment was approved unanimously by a show of hands.

The Moderator asked if J. Ortiz would like to speak to the motion. She deferred to M. Walter, Town Administrator. M. Walter said that the parcel is located at the back of Rec Park on Hennequin Road and this is a key parcel to get access to the property. There was one access to the property owned by the Town onto Route 66. M. Walter explained that the town has been working on this for four years and spent two years trying to get access through the cell tower driveway, but they denied that request. We then tried working with DOT to get access and that didn't work. The owner of the property came to us about selling the land to the town because they wanted to preserve the land and we designed the new access point. M. Walter said the funds are in the Open Space account for the purchase of the property.

The Moderator asked if there were any further discussion regarding the motion.

Joan Hill, 23 Cards Mill Rd. asked if the proposed acquisition for this property was presented to Planning and Zoning (PZC). M. Walter said yes, as required under C.G.S 8-24 it was presented for approval by PZC. Yes 8-24 approval of planning and zoning. J. Hill asked how deep the pond was on the property. M. Walter said he was not sure how deep the pond was. J. Hill said she was concerned about liability. J. Hill asked if the Department of Transportation (DOT) approved the site line. M. Walter said that we have applied for a new access to point to the property. He said there will be modifications made to the guardrail, additional gravel added, a culvert pipe will need to be put in and a small patch will need to be paved leading to the highway. He said Public Works can do the culvert and paving and we own our own gravel pit.

J. Hill is concerned that the property did not score high enough for the requirements for open space quality. She said usually open space acquisition is for something important, not as a just a recreational access facility.

L. Napolitano asked will the old access road go back to the owner and the town won't be able to use that access. M. Walter said that is correct.

The Moderator re-read the MOTION and the Friendly Amendment into the record and called for a vote, by a show of hands. YES: 14 NO: 2 and 1 Abstention The MOTION PASSED.

The public meeting ADJOURNED at 6:53 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie