

KILLINGWORTH OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING Monday, August 11, 2014, TOWN HALL

Members present: Denis Cronin, Sue Davenport, David Gumbart, Charlie Martens

Members absent: Todd Berman

Visitors present: none

Chairman Gumbart called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

The group discussed its role in supporting the Board of Selectmen (BOS), particularly in view of renewed interest in working with the Venuti family to possibly reach an agreement to protect its lands. While having an opportunity to bring a land protection project to a vote of the town by referendum is a goal of the BOS, the Open Space Committee wants to ensure the BOS fully supports such an acquisition, and not simply the process itself. Granted, full support is dependent on what possible acquisition price may be agreed upon, but affirmation from the BOS on its support, including its willingness to communicate with the Town Board of Finance, will be important if there is to be a positive outcome from this effort.

In its previous active period, the Open Space Committee did identify a list of high priority parcels of land, where open space protection was worthwhile. This work included an assessment of a variety of factors, including: existence of rare and/or endangered species; size; proximity to existing open space; part of a greenway (or blueway – e.g. along Hammonasset River); ecological, scenic, historic or recreational resource; threat of development; availability, and; availability of funding. That exercise did identify the Venuti property (4 parcels, 300+ acres) as the top priority for protection, and a renewed focus on this property is logical, and receives the support of the Open Space Committee.

To move the process of negotiation along, the Committee agreed that identifying a current value of the property would be a required next step. To that end, the Committee will communicate to the BOS, through these written minutes, and personal communication (phone or email), its recommendation to hire a real estate appraiser to conduct an appraisal of the property. This may be accomplished by asking multiple appraisers to provide bids to conduct an appraisal, or perhaps by working with the individual who conducted an appraisal of the Venuti property for the Town in 2008, to obtain an updated version.

For mapping needs, Gumbart noted that he was contacted recently by Town Hall employee Cathie Jefferson. She was interested in existing maps, and GIS map data, that would help develop a current townwide open space map. He will respond and provide the data that was updated through 2009.

There was no new business brought forth in the meeting for discussion.

Old business included addressing issues related to the Venuti property; no other old business was discussed.

Chairman Gumbart adjourned the meeting at 5:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Gumbart", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

David Gumbart
Chairman