



TOWN of THOMPSON

MINUTES

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ORDINANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING

THURSDAY, MAY 05, 2022 @ 8:00 AM

MERRILL SENEY COMMUNITY ROOM – TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Al Landry, Dick Trudeau, Celeste Guimont, JoAnn Hall

ALSO PRESENT: Tyra Penn-Gesek, Town Planner; Valerie Clark, Resident; Donna Hall, Recording Secretary

Al Landry, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:11 AM.

Al Landry, Chair, stated the meeting notice was posted with the Town Clerk & posted in Town Hall, however, it was not posted on the Town website, therefore, no Motions will be made today, only discussion's will take place, the acceptance of information, & produce questions for next meeting.

1) Schedule Next Meeting Date

Discussion followed, members agreed to meet every 3rd Thursday of the Month's as needed. The next meeting will be held Thursday, May 26th, 2022 at 8:00 AM in the Merrill Seney Community Room of Town Hall.

2) Citizen's Comments

Valerie Clark, of 105 Alm Rd., Town resident & property owner, is on the Agricultural Commission, gave a brief history to members of the Open Space program. Approximately 43 years ago, the Planning Commission approved PA-490 program, unfortunately it was never put into the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD), & during recent revisions of the POCD, the language was never put into the POCD, the proper process was never followed. There are many properties in Town that are in the Open Space Program. The Agricultural Commission did abundant research, a great deal of time was involved, they created a "draft ordinance" for the Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC) to use as a guide.

3) Review PA-490 Open Space Program

Al Landry, Chair, stated land classified as Farm & Forestry land is already in a lower tax assessment per CT. General Statutes. Al questioned if there are other Town's that have an ordinance for 'Open Space' only, that the ORC could look at for possible guidance. Tyra Penn-Gesek, Town Planner, stated she has a listing of Towns with only 'Open Space' ordinances, she will make copies & handout to members to review. Al stated the Town has many properties in 'Open Space' that property owners benefit from. Tyra stated the

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Assessor needs clear guidelines to implement 'Open Space' program. Member discussion ensued, ORC members need to review the "Purpose & Intent of PA-490" print out, gather information & resources, & members are encouraged to develop questions for their next meeting, Members would like draft ordinances from other Towns that have only Open Space ordinance. Tyra will send Donna other Town 'Open Space' ordinances to forward to ORC members to review. The State put into law the Forestry & Farmland reduced assessment procedures, the individual Towns had to decide on their own 'Open Space' policies. The Planning Commission approved the language in 1979, the language needed to be officially placed in the POCD, it never was, so policy was never formally adopted officially. The Town has been administering illegal for the past 43 years. The purpose of this ordinance is to correct this. The State can block grant funding to the Town if the Town doesn't fix the policy. Celeste Guimont feels commercial & industrial properties should not be eligible for PA-490. Dick Trudeau questioned what/where the conflict is with PZC adopting proposed language. JoAnn Hall agrees with the 3 acre minimum undeveloped parcels eligibility for the Open Space program. Tyra noted an ordinance needs to be drafted & adopted as the Open Space eligibility time period is September-October annually, so we need to get a policy & ordinance in place. Al mentioned the Assessor, Paul Hopkins, is available to answer questions. Members are encouraged to create a list of what would be allowed, or would not be allowed in the 'Open Space' program.

4) Citizen's Comments

Valerie Clark, 105 Alm Rd., stated on pg. 3 of the "Publication of CT. Farm Bureau Association Inc." booklet it states it is a tax benefit to the Town for property owners to stay in Open Space programs, studies have conclusively demonstrated that property tax revenues generated by open space land are far greater than the municipality's expenditures to service that land. The proposed ordinance should be fair to all the property owners that have been eligible for 'Open Space' for the past 43 years, not to be reclassified for eligibility.

The meeting was closed at 9:17 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Donna Hall,
Recording Secretary