

Town of North Canaan
Board of Selectman
Special Meeting
August 15, 2022

Present: First Selectman Charlie Perotti, Selectman Craig Whiting, Selectman Christian Allyn, Geoff Drury

Selectman Perotti called the meeting to order at 9:00am

Purpose of the meeting to discuss the state-owned land on Ashley Falls Rd -- file # 9959 35 (former disc golf location). We received information back from the state which was distributed to the board on what the State is proposing and the process. They have offered it to the town for \$190,000 to purchase or to lease (with restrictions) for \$1000 per month.

Mr. Drury had several questions, some of which were answered. There was some clarification of policies, the appraisal, how it would be advertised. They still did not define passive recreation, but Mr. Drury feels this is irrelevant because the town will not be leasing it.

There is an individual that is interested in possibly purchasing the land when it becomes available. The State emailed us the procedure on what will happen when it goes to bid. Selectman Perotti stated the town is not in the position to buy or lease the land and thinks they should let it go to bid.

Mr. Drury believes this piece of property would be a great recreational asset to the town. He would like it titled to the town and short term would like to see disc golf go back in. It is a nice piece of property for walking and would be a nice long term solution. He understands the monetary restraints, but thinks there could be private funding opportunities to look into. He is not comfortable with the property ending up not being in the towns hands. Town has the first option to match the highest private bid and then the property would go to the town at that price. At this point the best strategy it wo wait and allow the public bid process to take place and hope that with the wetlands and access issues bids will be low enough that the town could still acquire it. There was a discussion of the American Rescue funds being used.

Selectman Whiting said that if Mr. Drury has a group that would privately invest why wouldn't they go into it as a whole and put it into conservation and get a payout from the state for putting it into conservation. Selectman Whiting stated there would be large opposition to the town owning this property. Mr. Drury agrees about opposition. Selectman Allyn spoke on land trusts and possibilities of conservation.

Public Comment: Beth McGuire stated that this discussion of property was had in August 2021 and the town was clear they would not be purchasing property and not be responsible for them (we have enough property to take care of now) and wants to know why we are talking about it again. Selectman Perotti stated that this is just to get everyone's opinions on the property. Cheryl Duntz questioned owning or leasing the property and having a business on it. If the State has no control over it, then the town becomes a landlord. Mr. Drury stated disc golf is NOT a business.

Selectman Perotti reiterated that right now we can't pay for it so we need to see what happens when it goes to bid. There was a discussion of where the American Rescue money is being used for and it is not this project.

Beth McGuire stated these meetings need to be done when more taxpayers can be available to come to the meeting.

There was a discussion of disc golf tournaments and money changing hands- Selectman Allyn stated this cannot happen at all.

There was a discussion of it being run thru the rec committee or the greenway committee. Selectman Perotti stated we want our ducks in a row and let's just see what happens. The state will notify us if a bid is given and we have 45 days to act. We will let them know we are interested in that part of the process.

There was a discussion regarding taxes and unclaimable debt.

Selectman Whiting made a motion to adjourn. Selectman Allyn seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

Meeting adjourned 9:57pm

Respectfully submitted,

Ayrslea A Odell
Recording Secretary