

**Planning and Zoning Commission
Special Meeting
Tuesday March 30, 2021 at 7:00 P.M.
Teleconference Meeting**

1. Call to Order

Chairman Art Moran, Jr. called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M.

2. Roll Call

Members

Art Moran, Jr. – Chairman
Richard Chalifoux – Vice Chairman
Anne Sabrowski -Secretary
Charles Raymond
Doreen Rankin - excused
Mike Sinko

Alternates

Robert Berube – excused
Nate Koniecko – absent
Phillip LaPierre – absent

Kathy Warzecha – Town Planner
Kimberly Lang – Recorder

3. Determination of Quorum

4. Other Business

a. Gary Piszczek to address PZC regarding Avalonia’s request for purchase of open space.

Gary Piszczek of the Conservation Agricultural Commission explained that Avalonia has a pending contract to acquire two parcels of land from the Kendall Family, 15 Rude Road, which is 130 acres and 119 Lewis Road which is 122 acres. Avalonia is requesting that the town of Preston partner with them to acquire these parcels. They will maintain and oversee the management of this property for conservation and recreational purposes. Avalonia has procured two grants to help with the cost. One grant from the state for \$195,775 and the other from DEEP for \$175,000. The total cost of the property is \$440,500 leaving a shortfall of \$93,750. It is the hope of both the Conservation Commission and Avalonia that the Town of Preston help cover a portion of the shortfall.

Kathy Warzecha shared that there is about \$130,000 in the Open Space Fund and let it be known that it takes a while to accumulate and recommended not more than \$50,000 to be used at this time. She also stated that the property is in agricultural area along Route 164 consistent with POCD open space recommendations. There are significant wetlands including Broad Brook. It has been the policy of the Commission that the town leverage with other entities when purchasing land.

Dennis Main, Finance Chairman with Avalonia Land Conservancy Inc. and currently President and a Board Member, added that it was his understanding that the 208-acre parcel is currently under negotiation with the State DEEP and that Avalonia is actively trying to acquire the other two parcels so it is hoped that the entire area will become protected land. Currently Avalonia has until August to complete negotiations. Avalonia often partners with towns to complete purchases because towns people can benefit from the purchase of open space. Avalonia actively maintains trails, protects fragile areas on property, and oversee

the management of the property once it's acquired. Mr. Main also stated that there are already several trails on the property that will offer people opportunities to go hiking, biking, and running. He went on to explain once it's known what Preston can contribute that they would begin fundraising efforts to cover the remaining cost. Once all the funds are procured then and only then would the Town need to turn over the funds they have pledged.

Richard Chalifoux asked if there is a way that the town could be recognized for its part in securing this property.

Dennis Main stated that Trail Head signage could be worded in such a way as to give the town the recognition it deserved for its contribution for procuring the land.

Gary Piszczek shared that he felt it was important to keep track of the properties that the town has purchased over the years and that it's important to remember Avalonia has been a good partner over the years. He also pointed out with the help of Avalonia the two parcels in question would be purchased for about \$197 an acre which is a tremendous buy. He also noted that based on the Open Space Plan which is part of the POCD, this is part of the Broad Brook area that is recommended to acquisition and/or protection.

Richard Chalifoux motioned to recommend to the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and the Town to allocate \$50,000 for the Conservation Commission to partner with Avalonia Land Conservancy in the purchase of two parcels of land totaling 252 acres. Charles Raymond seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Request for funding for POCD

Kathy Warzecha explained that before the Board of Selectmen could consider the request that the Planning and Zoning Commission needed the \$5,000 for the Plan of Conservation Development be in the form of a formal motion. She also stated that a presentation to the Board of Finance would be necessary.

Mike Sinko motioned that the Planning and Zoning Commission request \$5,000 to start the Plan of Conservation Development research this year. Richard Chalifoux seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Public Comment –

Terry Eickle, 8 Doolittle Road, stated that she works with Avalonia and thanked the Commission for their support in Avalonia's efforts to purchase the property.

6. Adjournment

Richard Chalifoux motioned to adjourn at 7:48 P.M. Mike Sinko seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Lang

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