

**LAND ACQUISITION AND HISTORIC PROPERTY INVESTMENT COMMITTEE
VIRTUAL VIDEO MEETING**

June 24, 2020

6:00 P.M.

MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Kilpatrick, Dennis Schain, Patrick Clancy, Helen Robbins, Jack Prior, Eric Prause, Patrick Kennedy, Joel Janenda

STAFF PRESENT: Kyle Shiel, Senior Planner
David Laiuppa, Environmental Planner
Gary Anderson, Director of Planning and Economic Development
Doug Sanborn, Chief of Surveys

OTHERS PRESENT: Malcolm Barlow, Manchester Land Conservation Trust
Dermot Jones, Manchester Land Conservation Trust
Lincoln LeFebvre, Manchester Land Conservation Trust

Discuss potential acquisition of the Lombardo farm land property at 60 Bush Hill Road and 871 Hillstown Road

Mr. Shiel said to clarify the agenda item, the Town's role in any potential acquisition of the former Lombardo farm property would be providing support to the Manchester Land Conservation Trust ("Land Trust") via Town land acquisition bond funds in order to facilitate the purchase. He said the Land Trust would hold title to the property.

Mr. Kilpatrick began by summarizing the Staff memorandum from June 19, 2020. He said the memorandum gave a brief history of the Land Trust efforts to negotiate the price of the Property and to acquire funding from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). The total purchase price for the 102-acre parcel is \$1.7 million. The Land Trust was able to acquire a grant of \$300,000 from DEEP. He said the memo states the Land Trust believes they will be able to raise \$400,000 through donations and fund raisers.

Mr. Janenda sought to clarify that the proposed purchase of 102 acres would abut an existing Land Trust owned parcel of 75 acres. Mr. Shiel replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Kilpatrick asked what would happen if the Town agreed to appropriate the requested funding and the Land Trust failed to raise the needed additional funding for the purchase of the Property in question. Mr. Barlow said that the Town and the State of Connecticut would retain their money if, for any reason, the land purchase deal did not work out. Mr. Janenda asked how much money the Town has provided the Land Trust toward the adjacent Botti Farm. Mr. Barlow said that the Town had given the Land Trust \$99,000 towards the purchase and an additional \$50,000 towards the mortgage on the property.

Mr. Kennedy asked if the final funding piece of \$400,000 was achievable for the Land Trust. Mr. Barlow said that he believed that between grants, gifts, and fund raisers, the Land Trust would be able to raise the needed funds. He said this one time investment by the State, the Town, and the citizens would benefit the Town and the residents forever.

Mr. Clancy asked if there were any large purchases on the horizon that may require accessing the bond funds. Mr. Shiel said that there are no planned major purchases and that this committee could revisit their list of priority lands to be purchased so that they could determine if there are any parcels of interest to the Town. Mr. Prause said that, if there were to be any discussions about other priority parcel purchases the discussion should go off-line in an executive session.

Mr. Barlow said that the Land Trust has been negotiating the purchase of this parcel with the Lombardo family since 2007. At that time there was a developer that showed interest in the parcel. The developer has since withdrawn from any interest in the property. He said that he does not feel that the price of this parcel will substantially decline.

Mr. Kennedy said he thought the basic question that this committee needed to address was whether the Town should spend money on lots of small, disconnected parcels or if the money should be spent on large pieces. He said that he believes that the mission of this committee should be to preserve those larger pieces that could otherwise be developed and lost from preservation.

Mr. Prior asked if the Land Trust had considered purchasing this land and then selling the frontage on Hillstown Road to help pay for the purchase. Mr. Barlow said that the State grant will not allow subdivision of lands purchased with this money. He added that they had asked the Lombardo family to carve out the Hillstown Road frontage of the parcel but that the family had no interest in doing so. Mr. Janenda asked if there had been an assessment of the property for environmental impacts. Mr. Barlow said that there had been a “farm dump” from when there was a pig farm on the site. DEEP had ordered a clean-up of the dump area and has since signed off that the site is satisfactorily clean as of 2018.

Decision

Mr. Kennedy made a motion to recommend that the Manchester Board of Directors allocate \$1 million to the Manchester Land Conservation Trust for the purchase of the Property currently known as the Lombardo Farm. Mr. Kilpatrick seconded the motion. Seven members voted in favor and Ms. Robbins abstained, citing her membership to the Land Trust. The motion carried.

New Business

Mr. Prause requested that, when the prioritization map is updated for the next meeting, the land values should also be updated so the Committee may get a better sense of potential outlays. Mr. Prior asked if there are any other historic properties that are being considered for preservation at this time. Mr. Shiel beyond the initial inquiry about potential renovations at the Old Manchester Museum, there are none that he is aware of. Mr. Shiel confirmed that the agenda

for the next meeting will include: approval of minutes, election of officers, review of priority parcels, and discussion of any historic properties to be addressed by the committee.

Mr. Kennedy made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Prior seconded and all members voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 6:51 pm.