

The Otsego Town Board held a Special Meeting on the 21st day of September 2015 at the Town Building, Fly Creek, and NY at 5:00 PM.

Town Board Members Present:

Anne Geddes-Atwell	Supervisor
Thomas Hohensee	Councilperson
Carina Franck	Councilperson
Bennett Sandler	Councilperson

Also Present:

Michelle Kennedy	Town Attorney
Pamela Deane	Town Clerk

Supervisor Geddes-Atwell called the Special Meeting to order and asked all those present to please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilperson Sandler read a statement regarding the RFP by the Otsego Land Trust (OLT) for Brookwood Point. In the statement Sandler explains that the Town Board was asked by two town residents to submit a proposal to the OLT to acquire half or the entire 22-acre parcel known as Brookwood Point. It was thought that the town should do this to keep Brookwood open to the public by making it a Town Park. Ideas were presented to the Town Board on how the property could be used to generate income to offset expenses. Councilperson Sandler felt this a plausible idea if, in fact, Brookwood Point were going to fall out of the hands of an owner who was not dedicated to protecting the natural and historical environment, to maintaining public access to the site, and to promoting a quiet and serene place to experience the lake, but he did not feel this is the case. It was his opinion that the OLT has the staff, the knowledge, and the mission to be the best stewards of Brookwood. The OLT is one of the most significant forces preserving land in Otsego County so why shouldn't they be trusted to find the right owner for such a sensitive parcel. In closing Councilperson Sandler stated that at this point and time he was disinclined to submit a proposal on behalf of the town for any portion of Brookwood Point, not because he did not think the property should be a town park but because he believed the OLT is the most qualified and capable organization to steward Brookwood Point into the future.

Supervisor Geddes-Atwell and Councilpersons Hohensee and Franck echoed Councilperson Sandler's opinion that the best overseer of Brookwood Point is the OLT for all the same reasons he mentioned.

Supervisor Geddes-Atwell opened the floor for comments limiting comments to five minutes

Meg Kiernan said she trusted the OLT 100% to do the right thing.

Joseph Potrikus applauded the Town Boards decision. He felt that if in the future this issue presents itself again the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals should be invited to participate in the discussion. He felt that there are a lot of resources between the three boards that would be beneficial to the entire process.

Vera Talevi stated that the primary mission of the OLT is to promote and protect pure air and pure water and she felt that what was being proposed went against both of those goals. She was in favor of a Town Park.

James Atwell congratulated the Town Board for their tremendous work towards a conclusion on this proposal. He felt all statements made by the Board were well managed and wonderfully comprehensive.

James Dean fully agreed with James Atwell in that all statements were well thought out and well presented. It was a pleasure to observe the process.

Pat Thorpe felt Councilperson Sandler did a great job in his summarization of the OLT RFP for Brookwood Point but disagrees with the Boards trust in OLT to do the right thing. She felt more people should be concerned with the OLT considering selling the property, putting the money from the sale to bankroll other projects, and residents losing the wonderful privilege of enjoying the gardens and boat access to the Otsego Lake. She felt that if the Town Board did not submit an RFP the OLT would use that as argument to sell the property saying the Town showed no interest in preserving the history or public freedom to use it. She also felt there should be a stipulation that if the northern end of the property is sold the money generated from the sale is to be used towards the southern end of Brookwood Point and no where else.

Councilperson Sandler stated that this process might not be over-he just did not think the Town Board

could respond to the RFP on the short time schedule that they were given. He thought the Board could be receptive to exploring, in a public way, some form of negotiation with the OLT ensuring that the entire Brookwood Point property does not become private. He wanted to make it clear that if the OLT uses the excuse to sell the property because neither the Town nor the Village showed interest in the property then all potential donors to the OLT, "BEWARE". He felt there was a consensus from the Town Board that something could be worked out but it is a complex process and they are not going to put the taxpayers' money into a bidding war for that property. Discussions with members of the OLT disclosed that they have two years before the endowment is depleted. Councilperson Sandler felt that if this is a stepping-stone to completely sell off Brookwood Point as a private sale to bank roll the rest of their work, he would be severely disappointed that Brookwood Point, which is a gem, was let go.

MOTION by Supervisor, seconded by Councilperson Franck, to submit Councilperson Sander's letter that was read publicly earlier in the meeting, be sent as a response to the OLT's RFP after it has been reviewed by the Town Attorney.

MOTION CARRIED: All were in favor.

MOTION by Councilperson Sandler, seconded by Councilperson Franck, to go into Executive Session to discuss the Trip Hill litigations.

MOTION CARRIED: All were in favor. (5:36PM)

MOTION by Supervisor Geddes-Atwell, seconded by Councilperson Hohensee, to come out of Executive Session.

MOTION CARRIED: All were in favor. (6:26PM)

MOTION by Councilperson Sandler to adjourn.

MOTION CARRIED: All were in favor.

Meeting ended at 6:28PM

The next regular meeting will be at the Town Building in Fly Creek, on October 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Pamela Deane/Town Clerk