

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Telephone
(914) 277-5582
Fax
(914) 277-3790

Town of Somers
WESTCHESTER COUNTY, N.Y.

SOMERS TOWN HOUSE
335 ROUTE 202
SOMERS, NY 10589

MICHAEL BARNHART
CHAIRMAN



MEETING MINUTES
July 16, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m.

The following members were in attendance: Jan Antonucci, Michael Barnhart, Bob MacGregor, Gail Simpson and Rosey VanWart.

Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. MacGregor and seconded by Mrs. Simpson to approve the minutes of the June 11, 2026 meeting.

APPLICATIONS

Heritage Hills

A submission to erect a gazebo in a park in Heritage Hills received from the Planning Board was reviewed and discussed. There were no objections. A memo will be sent to the Planning Board.

3 Arthur Court

The Committee reviewed and discussed a submission from the Planning Board for a proposed subdivision at 3 Arthur Court. The Committee has the following concerns:

- It is unclear on what basis the developer is conforming to Somers's zoning codes as there is insufficient frontage for a second lot, 150', (except for a proposed grant of right of way to the Town). There appears to be no Town benefit associated with such a ROW grant, and as such this appears to be a troubling strategy for meeting Town zoning requirements.
- The use of Belgian block as curbing throughout the site is detrimental to the movement of amphibians through the site. The proximity of a wetland (around 600 feet) and the documented movement of salamanders and other species to a distance of 750' from wetland areas makes their presence in such an upland area a probability.

- The EAF, item 12b, indicates the project is located in or near an archaeologically sensitive area, but no details are provided nor is the need for a protection plan addressed.

We do not see a tree removal plan provided with the application for the proposed driveway extension and new dwelling making it difficult to determine biodiversity impact.

Veolia Water Treatment Plant

A submission for a proposed water treatment building and water tank was reviewed and discussed. The Committee would prefer to see the building moved in order to reduce the needed variances as well as its impact on the neighboring Rhinoceros Creek Reservation. Beyond this overall concern, the Committee has the following comments.

1. The stormwater management and controls as proposed appear inadequate. The proposed infiltration drywell to handle stormwater from the new 40,000-gallon tank may not be adequate given that the proposed location has not been tested for percolation, as pointed out by the Town's engineer. We note that Suburban Engineering's proposed pretreatment system requires an effective perc rate of 10"/hour. However, without testing, we have little idea whether this rate is achievable. We note that much of the soil in this area at the toe of the slope is wet with presumably low percolation rates. We are also concerned that the stormwater from the new grass areas where trees and vegetation have been removed, the new impervious driveway, the existing impervious driveway, the new staging area, the roof from the existing building, as well as the stormwater from the impervious area around the water chemical water tank and the back two acres of the property will combine to create greater total stormwater load than has been planned for. We also note that the proposed area for the truck turnaround is sometimes underwater after heavy rain and thus unusable on those occasions.
2. There is no snow removal, snow clearing, or snow storage plan. With the proposed building, fence and driveway close to the property line there will be no place for snow storage on the Veolia property. Does Veolia contemplate obtaining an easement from the Somers Land Trust for dumping removed snow?
3. There needs to be a parking plan on the Veolia property for Veolia employees, operation technicians, equipment service technicians, contractors, delivery vehicles, and response staff. With the building and fence close to the property line the former 6 – 8 parking places on Veolia property are lost. Their current parking plans depend on obtaining an easement from the Somers Land Trust, but we would like to see what backup plans exist in the absence of such an agreement.

As a general matter, the Open Space Committee is concerned about negative impacts to the Rhinoceros Creek nature preserve as an attractive destination for visitors seeking out quiet, natural spaces. A large infrastructure project such as this risks driving away visitors as well as organizations that conduct nature-related activities on the property. Since the Somers Land Trust relies on

revenues generated by these activities, as well as membership dues inspired by public use of its property, the project could well have a significant impact on the welfare of the Somers Land Trust. The property is a significant natural resource for the Town, especially given its proximity to the Business Historic Preservation District of Somers. As such negative impacts have a serious public effect, we urge the Planning Board to bear these impacts in mind while reviewing Veolia's proposals.

Old Business

Proposed Partial Ban on Gas Powered Leaf Blowers

In May, a memo was sent to the Town Board proposing a partial ban on gas powered leaf blowers. The Committee was asked to attend the June 4th Town Board Work Session for a review and discussion. Mr. Barnhart attended and represented the Committee. The Town Board appreciated the information presented. After a discussion at the June Open Space Committee, all thought perhaps creating a Resolution to propose a County-Wide partial ban should be considered. Since the June meeting, the Town Supervisor received a letter from the County stating that it cannot propose such a ban and the individual municipalities would have to do that and should consider working together to do so. Bedford has adopted such a ban and Mrs. Schirmer will get a copy of it and share it for a discussion at the next meeting in September.

New Business

253 Route 202

Mr. MacGregor attended a Technical Committee meeting regarding a change of use for a business located at 253 Route 202 in the Business Historic Preservation District. The Committee received a submission from the Planning Board for a new business, Proclinx Physical Therapy and Chiropractic which was reviewed and discussed. As the proposal is for a change of use, the Committee has no objection to the application. However, it appears that there will be upgrades to the rear parking area involving plantings, lighting, and demarcation of parking spaces. There also appears to be an addition of nine new spaces on the eastern side of the lot. There also is no stormwater plan provided, and the Committee would like to know how the stormwater will be managed in the existing and any new parking areas behind the building. We are especially concerned if any trees have to be removed if a stormwater infrastructure needs to be added. Lastly, we would prefer to see native plantings installed in the islands located in the rear parking area. NYSDEC maintains a list of suggestions that the applicant can consult and select from. A memo will be sent to the Planning Board.

339 Route 202

Mr. MacGregor attended a Technical Committee meeting regarding a change of use for a business located at 339 Route 202 in the Business Historic Preservation District. The Committee received a submission from the Planning Board. There will be no changes to the interior of the building and parking is adequate for the proposed use. There were no objections. A memo will be sent to the Planning Board.

366 Route 202

Mr. MacGregor attended a Technical Committee meeting regarding paving existing gravel areas for a business located at 366 Route 202 in the Business Historic Preservation District. The Committee received a submission from the Planning Board. The Committee accepts the conclusions in the submitted materials regarding aquifer impact but is concerned that the stormwater plan, to direct flow into the existing catch basins located along Route 202, may prove inadequate. There is no analysis provided indicating that those basins are sized to accept increased stormwater coming off the site. We believe a 'Plan B' for excess stormwater is merited. One option could be the use of a rain garden on the neighboring vacant property that is also owned by the applicant. If a rain garden is to be used, it should incorporate the existing trees into the design if feasible, as we discourage the unnecessary cutting of any trees. The use of porous pavers or pavement are also options.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m. The next meeting will be on Thursday, September 10th at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Denise Schirmer, Secretary
Somers Open Space Committee

cc: Open Space Committee
Town Board
Town Clerk
Town Assessor