



Legislation Text

File #: 23-2033, Version: 1

FINANCIAL BUSINESS REQUEST (FBR)

Motion/Request:

MOTION to authorize the Mayor to issue a “*Letter of Commitment*” to the Avalonia Land Conservancy in response to their request of \$50,000 and \$100,000 from Account #21090305-58920 (Acquisition of Open Space in the CNR Fund) for the acquisition of the following two parcels to be protected and utilized as open space to be payable to Avalonia Land Conservancy at the time of the closing:

- (1) 154 Stoddard’s Wharf Road, Ledyard 35.95 acres (\$50,000)
- (2) 148 Stoddard’s Wharf Road, Ledyard 223.47 acres (\$100,000)

Background:

Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc. is again seeking to utilize a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) between Groton Utilities (GU), Avalonia and the Town of Ledyard to acquire the following two parcels to be permanently protected and utilized as open space:

- (3) 154 Stoddard’s Wharf Road, Ledyard 35.95 acres
- (4) 148 Stoddard’s Wharf Road, Ledyard 223.47 acres

The two parcels abut one another, and the latter abuts the head of the Groton Reservoir system.

The use for both properties would be passive recreation. The latter also contains prime farmland soils and areas of sensitivity per the State Natural Diversity Data Base.

Both contain FEMA flood zone areas- susceptible to 100-year flood events.

Avalonia Land Conservancy has requested the Town of Ledyard provide assistance with the drafting/preparation of the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition (OWSA) Grants Applications and to secure letters of support. The Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition (OSWA) Grant Program provides financial assistance to municipalities and nonprofit land conservation organizations to acquire land for open space, and to water companies to acquire land to be classified as Class I or Class II water supply property. Awards are granted to projects that offer the highest conservation and recreational value and that leverage the greatest percentage of private and municipal funding.

In addition, Avalonia Land Conservancy has requested financial assistance from the Town of Ledyard via financial buy-in of \$50,000 and \$100,000 respectively. Ledyard provided this type of support in Avalonia Land

Conservancy's acquisitions of the Atkinson parcel and Dirlam parcel on Long Cove Road, Gales Ferry.

Ordinance #200-009 "*An Ordinance Providing for the Transfer of Certain Revenue from the Real Estate Conveyance Tax to Specific Town of Ledyard Funds*" sets aside twenty percent (20%) from the real estate conveyance tax that is then deposited to Fund 6, Capital and Non-Recurring Funds, for the acquisition of Open Space. (please see attached Ordinance)

The Open Space Account has a current balance of \$383,788.33 with no open commitments at this time. If this motion was approved, it would leave a balance of \$233,788.33. There is the potential to increase the Open Space Fund with the sale of 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway for \$280,000. A Special Town Meeting has been for September 26, 2023 for the townspeople to vote on the sale of this property to Leonard D. Sherman. We could then discuss how to allocate the sale proceeds.

Department Comment/Recommendation:

(type text here)

Finance Director Comment/Recommendation:

(type text here)

Mayor Comment/Recommendation:

I support this motion and continued partnership with Avalonia to preserve what lands we can. Avalonia has proven to be excellent stewards of their holdings in Ledyard and has excellent capacity to continue that care.