

AUTOMATIC REFERENDUM TO PROTECT MEADOWOOD FOR OPEN SPACE AND FARMLAND

TOWN OF SIMSBURY SPECIAL TOWN MEETING ON APRIL 24, 2021

TOWN OF SIMSBURY MEADOWOOD REFERENDUM ANTICIPATED ON MAY 4, 2021

What is the Meadowood property?

Located on the north side of Simsbury, the 288 acre Meadowood property was once a tobacco farm where Martin Luther King, Jr. worked for two summers in the 1940s. The land sits between the Great Pond section of Massacoe State Forest and the 4,400 acre McLean Game Refuge. Today, Meadowood provides vital habitat for migratory birds, includes aquifer recharge areas, and is significant for a number of endangered species.

What are the Town of Simsbury's plans for Meadowood?

Transferring the Meadowood property to public ownership by the Town of Simsbury creates the opportunity for an expansive network of new trails and access points for hiking and exploration for neighbors and visitors, conserves vital wildlife habitat, will feature an area for future community needs, protects prime agricultural soils and working farmland, and will preserve the rich cultural heritage of the area with a dedicated historic site memorializing Martin Luther King Jr.'s time in Connecticut and on this farm.

Why now? Where did this measure come from?

The Board of Selectmen identified the purchase of Meadowood as a priority in their adopted capital plan. At the April 6, 2021 budget meeting, the Board of Finance did not include the purchase and acquisition of Meadowood with the FY 21/22 budget submitted to the Town's annual budget referendum, scheduled for May 4th. Electors submitted a petition with nearly 1,600 signatures to require the call of a special town meeting and automatic referendum on the purchase and funding of Meadowood.

How much will it cost to protect Meadowood?

The Town's anticipated contribution towards the acquisition, site improvements, and bonding costs is \$2,515,860, or approximately \$8,700 per acre. The total cost of the Meadowood property is over \$6 million, but grants and private donations will cover the balance.

How much will the bond measure cost me?

The median valued single family homeowner will pay approximately \$25 a year for ten years.

How will the Town pay for its contribution towards the purchase? How long will payments for the Town's bond last?

As proposed, the Town would fund its \$2,515,860 through borrowing (bonds). The bond would be for 10 years. Recent bond issuances have had a true interest cost in the 1.5%-1.65% range.





Who is The Trust for Public Land and what is their role in this process?

In 2020, the Town entered into an agreement with The Trust for Public Land to serve as a facilitator and to provide technical expertise in regards to the potential purchase of Meadowood. The Trust for Public Land is a 501c3, non-profit organization that creates parks and protects land for people. The Trust for Public Land is not paid directly by the Town, but rather fundraises to cover their costs. Similarly, partnerships with the community and The Trust for Public Land enabled the purchase of Ethel Walker Woods and Simsbury Meadows.

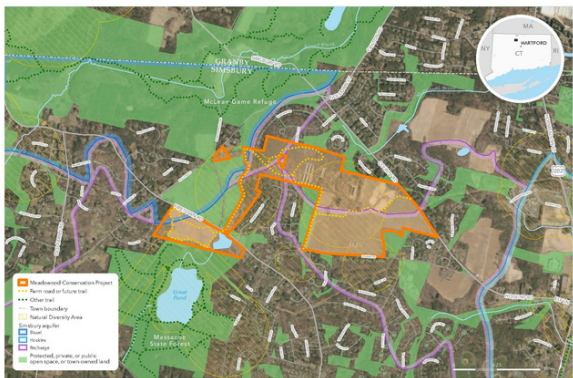
What will happen to the scenic/historic barns on Firetown Road and Hoskins Road?

The Trust for Public Land has secured \$400,000 to stabilize the remaining historic barns on Firetown Road and Hoskins Road, and facilitate the development of some interpretive elements around the history of the property. This work will occur through a participatory process, post-acquisition.

What happens if voters turn down the purchase?

The Trust for Public Land has an option to purchase the property until July of 2021, for subsequent conveyance to the Town. If the contract expires, the landowner will likely consider other offers on the property.

The Town of Simsbury will release information about a Special Town Meeting during the week of April 19.



Natural resource values map
 MEADOWOOD CONSERVATION PROJECT, SIMSBURY, HARTFORD COUNTY, CONNECTICUT
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For more information:
 April 6, 2020 Board of Selectmen meeting:
https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf1216/f/agendas/4-6-20_0.pdf
 September 15, 2020 Board of Finance meeting:
https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf1216/f/agendas/bof_packet_9-15-20.pdf