The following is in response to comments/questions received from Ms. Margaret Minor, Co-chair of Watershed Lands Group at CT Water Planning Council, concerning the transfer of a 27.5-acre parcel of land in Suffield, as listed in the Council on Environmental Quality Environmental Monitor (Environmental Monitor).

On November 3, 2022, Ms. Minor sent the following emailed comments to Melanie Fadoir, Supervising Property Agent in the Department of Transportation Property Management Section.

Question:

My first concern is that there is so little information provided about the properties to be transferred. It is likely that interested parties, such as abutting neighbors, local land trusts, water utilities, conservation commissions, interested individuals, and so forth may miss the posts altogether. Then, if the posts do come to their attention, much of the most relevant information is missing.

DOT Response:

Thank you for your comment. The Department of Transportation (Department) posted a brief description about the property in the Environmental Monitor. The posting highlighted that the property is vacant/wooded land with no appurtenances, there are ponds, streams and wetlands present throughout the property and there is a twenty-five-foot-wide sewer easement encumbering the eastern half of the property in favor of the Town of Suffield (Town). The Town assessor's parcel numbers were listed in the Environmental Monitor along with links to the assessor maps and an aerial map of the property. Pursuant to Connecticut General Statute 13a-80, and due to the size of this property, the Department first offered the parcel to other State Agencies and notified the appropriate State Legislators. The Legislators were notified of this release in June 2021.

Question:

There are no details relating to the price (such as an appraisal) given in the State post as far as I could see. But Suffield officials have approved the price and I know of no reason to question their judgement. My only comment is that the method for arriving at a price should be clear in State announcements of this kind of property transfer and should be, as far as possible, consistent in similar cases.

DOT Response:

Thank you for your comment. The property was appraised by a fee appraiser, pursuant to Connecticut General Statute 13a-80 which established the release value of $230,000.00. The appraisal was not included in the posting since it was prepared for the exclusive use of the Department of Transportation. The final sale price of $210,000.00 was reached through an Administrative Acceptance following negotiations with the Town of Suffield (Town). The release value is in line with the Town Assessor's appraised value of the property which can be found in public records.

11/14/2022

Question:

I strongly recommend, however, that the State legally bind Suffield to maintaining the property as open space for passive recreation, with the commitment filed in the town land records.

DOT Response:

Thank you for your comment. As the Municipality is purchasing this property for fair market value, the Department does not impose deed restrictions on the release of State Property. Initially the Town requested this property for open space purposes, however they may dispose of the property or utilize the property as they see fit.

Should you have any questions regarding the above responses, please contact Melanie Fadoir at (860)594- 2392 or via email at melanie.fadoir@ct.gov.

The Office of Policy and Management agrees with DOT’s responses to the public comments received regarding the subject Land Transfer Notices.