

Wilton Land Conservation Trust to Lead Effort to Save 183 Ridgefield Road

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Wilton, CT — The 13-acre meadow at 183 Ridgefield Road can be saved for public use under an agreement between Jim Fieber and the Wilton Land Conservation Trust (the “Land Trust”).

“Special thanks go to Jim Fieber and his family for agreeing to sell the Land Trust this prime piece of property and holding it off the market for a year while we raise the funds,” said Peter Gaboriault, President of the Land Trust.

This transaction could not have happened without the generous lead donation of \$750,000 from the Bauer Family Foundation and Jim Fieber’s willingness to sell the property at well below his cost basis. According to Jim, “When the Bauers committed their funds, I agreed to accept a price from the Land Trust at \$750,000 below my cost basis to help make this happen and preserve this beautiful open space.”

The Land Trust will take title to the property in the spring of 2019, once it raises the \$2.3 million needed to buy the site and make it accessible. “This is an ambitious challenge in a very tight timeframe,” acknowledged Mr. Gaboriault, “but we’ve already raised \$1 million. We think it’s possible and that we have to try.” The Land Trust will launch its town-wide fundraising campaign in the coming months.

Funds raised to date include \$250,000 from the members of the Land Trust’s board and the very generous \$750,000 from the Bauer Family Foundation. The board believes that \$500,000 can be raised in the town-wide campaign and hopes the balance will come from a grant under the State’s Open Space grant program. To secure the property for a year and comply with State rules, the land will be held by an intermediary aligned with the Land Trust.

183 Ridgefield Road, also known as the Schlichting property, is next to the Hillside Cemetery on scenic and historic Ridgefield Road. Recently, it was the subject of several development proposals to build as many as 35 houses on the property and was the impetus for the age-restricted overlay district (AROD) application for Ridgefield Road.

Donna Merrill, Executive Director of the Land Trust, says, “This site has it all! It’s an outstanding example of a rare meadow habitat that has been undisturbed for decades. I am also excited that we will partner with the Wilton Historical Society, the Woodcock Nature Center, and the American Chestnut Foundation to establish wonderful educational programs at the site.”

About Wilton Land Conservation Trust

Formed in 1964, Wilton Land Conservation Trust seeks to protect the character of green spaces in Wilton, Connecticut. Today, the private, non-profit organization protects 110 properties totaling in excess of 830 acres through ownership or conservation easement.

Contact

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