



# TOWN OF HAMDEN

## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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Mayor

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**THE NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION**, Town of Hamden, held a Regular Meeting on Wednesday March 25, 2009 at 8:00 p.m. in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Conference Room, Hamden Government Center, 2750 Dixwell Avenue, Hamden, CT. The following items were discussed.

Commissioners in Attendance: Aris Stalis, Mike McManus, Tom Parlapiano, Mike Horn, Bill Doheny, Marigrace Larke, Ham Milroy, Dick Bell

Absent: Gwen Emery, Ted Kennedy

Others in Attendance: Dan Kops, Town Planner  
Andy Brand, Land Trust  
Gerry Tobin, Commission Clerk

Mr. Horn called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m. and introduced former Commissioner Andy Brand, who had a presentation that he prepared for the NROS table at Earth Day. Commissioners viewed more than fifty slides of Hamden's beautiful natural areas and photos of insects, reptiles, birds and animals native to Hamden. The Commission will need a projector of laptop to show this presentation during the Earth Day celebration. Mr. Horn will discuss this with Ms. Roach at the Earth Day planning meeting tomorrow evening (Thursday, March 26<sup>th</sup>).

### 1. Review Minutes of Feb 25, 2009

Page 1, Dr. Doheny suggested the sentence in the first paragraph of Page 1 "People in that area... be stricken.

Page 2, add to the first sentence after money, "released at this time"

Page 3, Election of Officers – officers elected were chair, vice chair and corresponding secretary

**Mr. McManus made a motion to approve the minutes of February 25<sup>th</sup> as corrected. Mr. Milroy seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.**

### 2. Old Business:

#### a. Review of Town Hall – Police Station Plans

Mr. Stalis and Ms. Emery were to review plans for the Town Hall/Police Station project. Mr. Stalis was unable to get together with Ms. Emery, but said the town is still in the design process, and the plans are available on line. Mr. Stalis said they are getting points toward LEED accreditation and commissioning of the building takes place after the construction is completed. Points are given for energy usage, designated parking spots for hybrid vehicles, bicycle racks, etc. Mr. Horn asked about plugs for vehicles, and Mr. Stalis did not see those on the plans. He saw some things that from a design perspective could be amended somewhat. He feels they are trying to make good use of the LEED process. Prices are very good right now for construction.

### **b. Planning for Earth Day Sat. April 25, 2009**

We just saw Mr. Brand's slide show, which we will use for Earth Day, and Mr. Horn will update the handout from previous years. Mr. Milroy mentioned getting a stand for the map and Mr. Kops will provide a large Town map.

### **c. Masselli Property Update**

Dr. Doheny reported that the committee has received three or four proposals for the use of the Masselli Farm, one of which is haying two fields, which would be advantageous. We would just have to make sure it didn't interfere with nesting birds in the fields. Someone wants to do a winery there using about five acres. That person is getting federal authorization for a winery, and the requirement is five acres. The barn would lend itself to this even for a small tasting room. There is the public use versus private use issue. We might want to sell the barn and the house and lease the land for the winery. There is also someone who wants to put photovoltaics there and the committee is waiting for the proposal. Another is a man who just got a 501(c)(3) to do some farming with underprivileged, disabled, and handicapped people, and they are waiting for that proposal, to start next year. The difficulty, with the exception of the haying, is that you are giving a certain part of the property to an entity, which would deny other people use of the land.

Mr. Horn said USDA office in Wallingford gives April 1<sup>st</sup> as a guideline for planting and August 1<sup>st</sup> for haying. This preserves acreage as a grassland first stage habitat. Mr. Horn has also confirmed these dates with the Audubon Society. The grasslands attract native birds and flora and fauna. Full repopulation takes about ten years. Dr. Doheny said the committee will present a list of proposed uses and get comment from the Commissioners.

Tom Parlapiano asked if we lease out land for haying and a vineyard, is there any talk about the remaining property and how it might get cleaned up, etc. Dr. Doheny said he would ask the vineyard person to rip out the orchard, which is mid slope, because the trees are not usable, and the hillside would be perfect for the vineyard. You can still see where the roads were and a brush hog could open them up in a couple of days. Mike McManus thinks the parcel should be looked at as a whole and then figure out how to divvy it up. The trails would be great, and a butterfly garden and other things that would be compatible would be the best use. A decision won't be made until summer or fall. Mr. Milroy asked if the Commission would be able to recommend or endorse the proposals. Dr. Doheny said yes. Mr. Stalis said we should identify the key interests or importance to the Town. A tour of the property is appropriate, and the sooner the better. Dr. Doheny mentioned that there is some contamination on the property from pesticides from the previous use, but maps are available showing where the contamination is, how much, etc. He would hope that an expert could look at the contaminated areas and suggest what might be put in there to suck out some of the contaminants.

There was discussion of the Green Award to the Dunbar Hill Civic Association. They are actually planning a shindig on the property this summer. Mike McManus suggested the Association be invited here to our meeting. Dr. Doheny said there are five members of the civic association on the Masselli Farm Committee and one is the Vice President. Mr. Brand is on the committee for the Land Trust. We might invite some of the people who have made proposals to present them

Dr. Doheny announced that on the last Thursday in April the West Rock Ridge Advisory Council is meeting at 4:00 p.m. at the West Rock Nature Center. The State Director of Parks, the person in charge of land acquisition from the State and Lori from Sleeping Giant Park Association will be there.

Mr. Stalis reported that he met with Town Engineer Bob Brinton regarding Pardee Brook, and that is mostly putting the brook into a culvert. It is going to rely on getting easements from the abutting property owners. There may be an opportunity to preserve some trees, etc.

## **New Business**

The Benedict property still waiting on the appraisal and southern property boundary is not nearly defined. There is no news on the Stahnke property to date. Mr. Parlapiano asked Mr. Kops if the Town has funds for surveying that property line.

### **a. 740 Brooksvale Ave (Rear) DeNardis Property**

Dr. Doheny met with the Mayor on this and it appears that Mr. DeNardis is asking about \$50,000 an acre, which is very high. Dr. Doheny spoke to Mr. DeNardis five or six years ago about his property. Mr. Kops said the property is landlocked, so he can't build on it. If the Town were to purchase it, it would have to have an appraisal. This is 4.56 acres on the Blue Trail.

**Dr. Doheny made a motion that the DeNardis property would be a good acquisition if the price was reasonable. Mr. Horn seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.**

Mr. Parlapiano announced that this Saturday at 8:30 p.m. is Earth Hour, a statement about climate change, and it sends a message that people in Connecticut do something about it.

Mr. McManus announced that USDA office is moving from Wallingford into the upper floor in their Sanford Street building in September.

## **4. Adjournment:**

**Dr. Doheny made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Parlapiano seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.**

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gerry Tobin, Meeting Clerk