



# TOWN OF HAMDEN

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Craig B. Henrici

*Mayor*

**MINUTES:** The Natural Resources & Open Space Commission held a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, April 29, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. in the third floor conference room, Hamden Government Center. The following issues were discussed:

Commissioners in Attendance: Bill Doheny, Hamilton Milroy, Marigrace Larke, Richard Bell, Mike Horn, Ted Kennedy with Shannon & Caroline) Gwen Emery

Others in Attendance: Ron Walters, Regional Water Authority  
Dan Kops, Assistant Town Planner  
Gerry Tobin, Commission Clerk

Mr. Horn called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. Garrett Owen, a journalism student, was in attendance, accompanied by his dad.

## **Minutes**

Review minutes of March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009

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There are five members on the study group, one of whom is a member of the Maselli Farm study committee. .

Next paragraph, Lori is the State Park Unit Manager for the Sleeping Giant Unit

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

## **Old Business**

### **Maselli Property**

Mr. Horn said he went on a tour with Dr. Doheny and took several dozen pictures of the Maselli Farm. There have been several proposals for the property since our last meeting. Dr. Doheny reported that so far we have the Charlie Rosabianca for the winery; the student with his own flock that wants to raise sheep there. He has his own flock and a donkey that herds them. He is also looking for a place to live, which might solve the problem with the house. Ms. Emery asked if they would be located near water, because farm animals are toxic to streams. The houses in the area are on city water. Dr. Doheny said there are probably 25 sheep. The property is not in the watershed. Mr. Walters said there are regulations pertaining to farm animals in the public health code. Dr. Doheny spoke to the head of the Kingsmark Environmental Review Team and they would be happy to come out to review the property because they are interested in preserving farmland. This is at no cost. The owner of the sheep would sell grass fed lamb. He is coming from Mississippi and will bring the sheep with him. They are trained to electric fence. Dr. Doheny said he has not spoken to the photovoltaic people yet.

Mr. Rosabianca was in attendance. He is interested in having a winery on about five acres of the property. He has a map of the property and that shows his projected use. He has been searching for properties, but farmers want to sell to developers not a farm. Things look okay on the surface. In order to qualify as a Connecticut Farm Winery, he would have to have five acres of vines planted. He has looked at the slope, sun, pitch, etc., and he has a consultant that will look further into it. Five acres of grapes are proposed for the apple orchard. He has looked at the barn and it is structurally okay. The apple storage/cooler is a good place for him to get started. He has been working on this project for about 11 years and feels the barn would be a suitable start. The ceilings are too shallow for the tanks. He would need 15–20' ceilings. He would want to have caves to store the wine underground. He has a small vineyard in Spring Glen. He was worked with the Lockwood Farm and the Connecticut Agricultural Station, and they feel he could get a lot of varieties to grow here that that usually don't grow well in the northeast. He would have to spray certain chemicals. It is difficult to do organic farming here because of the humidity, which causes fungus, which could destroy the crop 100%. He would have to pull out the trees and turn the land a couple of times and the arsenic

currently there would dissipate. Ms. Emery asked about the impact on the land and any species on the property. She also asked about what kind of power he would be using. Mr. Rosabianca said he is looking at solar for at least a portion of the power. He is looking for some kind of interest on the part of the Town before he starts his final proposal. The Maselli Farm Committee would be the one to make a recommendation to the Mayor. His initial thought would be to have the fields hayed. Mr. Horn said for grassland habitats, there should be no haying before August 1<sup>st</sup>. Regarding the sheep, there is a winery in California with sheep on the property.

Mr. Rosabianca said the way the farm winery works, you have to have 25% of your grape from the land, and the remainder can be from anywhere. They give you seven years to get established. Mr. Rosabianca estimates it would cost \$2-300,000 for the building and \$75,000 for the plants. He would also have to remove the trees. He has been planning for this for many years and has recently retired from ATT. There is well water on the property. Crops usually take five years to reach maturity. He said he might get 100 gallons of wine this year from his 80 vines on 1/10 acre in Spring Glen. He would plant 6-800 vines per acre, which would result in one gallon per vine. 95% of the grapes would be US grown. He would want to build a house on the property. Dr. Doheny's committee will make a recommendation of uses to the Mayor. There is a man who wants to hay two fields. We have to see Mr. Rosabianca's plan and how much land he will need to use. Eventually we will have a public hearing. Dr. Doheny will bring the Commission up to speed monthly. He is going out to meet with the sheep owner next Wednesday.

Ms. Larke would like to see the property.

Today Dr. Doheny met with the Town Animal Shelter people at the property. They are looking for 1.5 acres. Should we decide to do the animal shelter, it would not conflict with any of the proposals we have so far. Mr. Rosabianca's proposal would pose the most conflicts on the property, especially because he wants to live there. The Town is looking to do some educational things at the animal shelter. It would be a \$1.5 million 5,000 square foot building.

Mr. Walters said the winery proposal sounds like a multigenerational proposal. There are more environmental concerns with the animal shelter than with the

sheep. Mr. Milroy said the Association that opposed the development on this property would probably also be opposed to a dog pound.

### **Review of Town Hall/Police Station Project**

Mr. Horn said Mr. Stalis and Ms. Emery were going to review the Town Hall Police Station renovation project, but that has not been completed to date.

Mr. Kops said the Plan has been submitted to P&Z for a Special Permit. It will go to several bodies to review, and then to P&Z in June. Mr. Stalis has the plans, and he and Ms. Emery are to look at it with our interest in mind. Dr. Doheny would be interested in seeing how green it comes out.

Mike Horn passed around postcards which he purchased from the Green Dragon Enterprises

### **Stahnke Property**

Mr. Kops has not heard anything. He has not heard anything new about the properties of interest to the Commission, including the DeNardis property.

### **New Business**

#### **Hamden Green Award**

Mr. Horn said the Commission decided to give the 2009 Hamden Green Award to the Dunbar Hill Civic Association, which we will present at a picnic on the Maselli Farm, possibly in June.

### **Review of Earth Day**

Mr. Horn said the good folks of Hamden outdid themselves. He estimates 3–4,000 people attended on April 25th. The Mayor, State Representatives, Matt ascot, and others were in attendance. Mary Mushinski, an environmentalist came. Earth Day was very well received. Mr. Horn, Mr. Milroy, Mr. Kennedy and Dr. Doheny were in attendance. Mr. Kennedy remarked that a lot of visitors were new to Town. Mr. Horn said he printed copies of the Commission's Mission Statement to use as a handout.

Ms. Larke participated at Earth Day and said it was the best one she has ever seen, with many different kids of exhibits. She purchased two composters.

The Commission gave a vote of thanks to Andy Brand for his pictures and his laptop, which attracted a lot of people.

Mr. Owen and his son Gary thanked the Commission.

### **Adjournment**

**Dr. Doheny made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Kennedy seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.**

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