



Town of Hamden

Planning and Zoning Department

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THE NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION, Town of Hamden, held a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, February 23, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. in the 3rd Floor Conference Room, Hamden Government Center, 2750 Dixwell Avenue, Hamden, CT. The following issues were discussed:

Commissioners in Attendance: Mike McManus, Peter Vitali, Mike Horn, Richard Bell, Daniel Camenga, Marigrace Larke, Bill Doheny

Commissioners Absent: Aris Stalis (excused), Hamilton Milroy (excused), Ted Kennedy

Guests: Bill Burns & Michelle Mastropietre
Dunbar Hill Civic Association

Others in Attendance: Dan Kops, Assistant Town Planner
Gerry Tobin, Meeting Clerk

1. Review Minutes of December 15, 2010

Page 3, last paragraph, change "purchase" to acquire

Mr. Vitali made a motion to approve the minutes of December 15, 2010 as amended. Mr. Bell seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

2. Old Business: DeMatteo, Masselli, State Street and Sablitz properties

There was no news to report on the DeMatteo Property.

The Maselli Property will be discussed under new business.

There was nothing to report on the State Street property.

Dr. Doheny reported that the Sablitz have resolved their probate issue and the paperwork is going back to the Attorney General's Office for signature (as of 2/22/11).

Mr. Horn asked Mr. McManus if he had any more information on the Natural Resources Conservation Service funding for the Land Trust. Mr. McManus said he will look into this further, but they can not fund public land. Dr. Doheny asked if Mr. McManus could pursue this further as the Land Trust might be involved. Mr. Camenga is a member of the Land Trust and he will see what he can find out as well.

McMann Property: Dr. Doheny said we may be seeing a pleasant surprise coming in the next few months.

3. New Business:

Mr. Horn said it is time for the Commission to start its review of Town owned open space property. This was discussed at our last meeting. Back in 2005 or 2006, he and former Commissioner Tom Parlapano went through Town and looked at every parcel of open space and commented on each parcel. Mr. Horn said he thought someone at the last meeting of the Commission said he had an up to date list. He asked Mr. Kops to try to find it and mentioned that that list came with a map. Mr. Camenga said the Land Trust, with help from an intern from Yale, reviewed private land and we have the Town list. Dr. Doheny added that we have or can get the state/regional list. Mr. Camenga added that if it was last reviewed in 2006, and if we plan to look at adjacent land, there are some new on-line/digital tools we could use. This might turn up some linkage. Mr. Kops has an intern that will be flagging the open space parcels on the GIS map.

NROS 2011 Earth Day Exhibit Saturday 4/30/2011 from 10:00 a.m. To 3:00 p.m.

Mr. Horn said the Commission will have a table, two chairs and an outlet. He plans to be there and needs volunteers to help man the table.

Mr. Horn received a letter from QRWA and a couple of other people via email, about stream flow and the possibility of adopting new stream flow regulations. He attended hearings regarding this last year and listened to what they had to say. He met Mr. Bell, who was there but not in an official capacity. There were arguments on both sides, everything got tabled, and not much happened. Once we find out when the hearings are and get copies of the new proposed legislation, it is our business to listen to the hearings and perhaps make a comment or two.

Mr. Bell said the DEP was mandated to come up with the regulations and report back to the Legislative Committee. The first set that was proposed was rejected because of objection by many people. It was sent back, reconfigured by the DEP and rejected a second time. After the most recent objection, there was an attempt on behalf of the DEP and the opposition to concoct regulations they could agree on, and then go back to the Legislative Committee.

Mr. Horn said the Commission wrote a letter of comment that was put into the record the first time around. This according to Mr. Bell is at least the third version. Ground water is not part of these regulations. DEP said they have to bring that back into focus.

Mr. Bell said the RWA's decent and good stream flow regulations would be a good thing for the state. The matter of regulating the water industry is backwards and upside down. They would classify stream flow but they haven't done that yet, which will take a couple of years to work out. It impacts the water company in ways they cannot see. He feels we should have one industry that regulates drinking water in the state of CT. What do we need - what do we have, and what do we do with the rest? We are the only state that is not allowed to take water out of our large rivers, the Connecticut, the Housatonic and the Shetucket. The impact is on smaller streams. We should take the DEP and Health Departments out of it and have a drinking water committee. Anything can be purified. Pennsylvania takes water from the Schuylkill River which goes through many major industrial cities. The RWA is a 501c3. It has no stockholders and is not interested in making money, only providing good drinking water.

Dr. Doheny asked about riparian rights. Mr. Bell said the taking of water from streams are riparian rights. You have the right to take water out for yourself.. The first registration and permit status required new people to take out a diversion permit, but the original takers were grandfathered. Golf courses, farmers, other users all have rights to take water, some unregulated, and some regulated under new diversion permits.

Mr. Horn said the Commission received a copy of a letter from Andy Brand to Mayor Jackson with copy to us suggesting the Town take land for back taxes, etc., and if appropriate, place it on our open space agenda.

Dr. Doheny said the Town will be starting negotiations with state for as much as 20 acres in West Rock. There are two sources of funds in conjunction with the state. The two sources of funding would be a 50% matching grant with state, or there could be 100% grant from Federal Government. There are no appraisals yet. If anyone is in Hartford on the March 2nd the West Rock Ridge Park Association and the Friends of the Connecticut State Parks Association will have a display in the concourse between the LLB and the Capital with displays. Governor Molloy is expected to be there around noon.

Dr. Doheny said we started a three prong campaign regarding the Maselli Farm. Mr. Rosabianca has hired an attorney and a firm to do technical research to see if his plan for the winery is viable. To speed things up we are asking the Legislative Council to put out another RFP for the Maselli Property. Regarding the House, the Historic Properties Commission is moving on this. Habitat for Humanity has expressed interest in the house.

The Barn – The Historic Properties Commission and the Dunbar Hill Civic Association in conjunction with the Hamden Historical Society are working on this. They have a grant from the state and will come up with the necessary matching funds to hire someone to do a study of the barn to find out if it is worth saving. There will be no cost to the Town. Depending upon the results of the study, the next step would be another grant which would essentially have someone come out and give an in depth engineering review of the barn, to see what it would cost to restore. Grant money is available for that, but not as generous as the others percentage wise.

Michelle Mastropietre and Bill Burns of the Dunbar Hill Civic Association (DHCA) are in attendance to discuss the Maselli Property. Mr. Burns said the DHCA was approached by Al Gorman of the Historical Society to engage with them on the preliminary study. They have a \$2,000 grant, and they will come up with remaining funds to do the architectural study. The barn roof and the carriage house have been put together as one piece and will be pricey because the carriage house will have to be demolished. Civic Association Officers feel this is a viable option for the property, which is a good sound agricultural part of our history. The same RFP will be reissued. They spoke with William Casey of Habitat for Humanity regarding the use of the house on the land, which is a two acre parcel that includes the barn. Mr. Casey would like a ¼ acre easement surrounding the house. Plans are to restore to original house inside and outside the same as the original but with newer materials on the exterior replicating the look of the house. 400 hours of sweat equity is required of the new owners, and Habitat will hold mortgage and pay taxes on the property. Mr. Casey will be at the Civic Association meeting on the 14th of March, which will be held at the Dunbar Hill Firehouse at the corner of Benham Street and Dunbar Hill Road at 7:15 p.m. The DHCA endorses the plan by Habitat at this time and is going to move forward with the barn assessment with the Historical Society with a vote of the body on the 14th.

Mr. Burns plans to have a cleanup action group on the Masselli property around the house and barn in May or June in conjunction with the Clean & Green Commission and is hoping to get the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts to help out. Mr. Camenga asked if they expect to have ample support and Mr. Burns replied yes. Mr. Camenga will inform the Land Trust. Both they and this body might want to participate.

Mr. Horn would like suggestions for an Earth Day Scheme for the Commission's table. Please email those suggestions to him for discussion at the March meeting.

4. Adjournment:

Dr. Doheny made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Bell seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
Gerry Tobin, Meeting Clerk