



Town of Hamden

Planning and Zoning Department

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MINUTES: THE NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION, Town of Hamden, held a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, May 30, 2012 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: Aris Stalis, Peter Vitali, Mike Horn, Bill Doheny, Hamilton Milroy, Dan Camenga, Kevin Burgio, Marigrace Lark

Commissioners Absent: Richard Bell, Mike McManus

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

1. Review: Minutes of April 25, 2012

Mr. Vitali made a motion to approve the minutes of April 25, 2012. Mr. Doheny seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

2. Old Business: Masselli Property and other Properties of Interest

Update on Legislation: The legislation regarding towers failed to pass: however, the commissioner on his own can still make a decision about a tower.

Mr. Doheny reported that the solar plan for the Masselli property is dead.

Mr. Milroy reported that he spoke to Al Gorman, and he said he talks monthly with Mr. Burns from Dunbar Hill Civic Association about the Masselli property. His concern is the cost of maintenance. His interest is possibly recreation playing fields. Mr. Horn reminded commissioners that this site was almost a middle school. He also brought up the attempt for conservation which involved the Hamden Land Trust as well as others. At that time it looked to Mr. Gorman that the Land Trust was getting all the perks and the Town was getting all the garbage.

Mr. Milroy said his 9th district councilman is Scott Harris and he has been unable to reach him for the past two weeks.

Mr. Camenga said what Mr. Milroy said is something he sensed is out there. It is not clear where the idea that the Land Trust would have all the perks came from. The Land Trust is an entity that exists for the protection of land in Hamden. The Land Trust would be encumbered with the new burden of making sure the land was protected., The perk is that the organization is able to further its mission to the people of Hamden. He feels that claim is irritating at best. Perhaps the fact that there is a liability on the town might be discussed in a way that is more productive than looking at it as good and evil. The Land Trust discussed this. Kath Schomaker encouraged the folks not to be pounding on the doors of the Council

representatives at this time. The Council's job would be to review action and there is no action at this time. He has encouraged people to come up with options. Without a clear path it might be time to step back and come up with a clear plan. We need to generate an idea. Mr. Horn referred to the charrette that Mayor Amento held regarding Town Center Park. Perhaps we should ask for public comment or have a charrette. Perhaps we could do this jointly with the Land Trust.

Mr. Stalis said this would have to look at existing conditions, surrounding area, needs of the community, etc. Mr. Milroy feels we might end up where we started from. We already have a lot of ideas, and we might get some new ideas. Mr. Doheny said one of the problems from the Town side is there is no proposal. The general consensus is it should stay open space. The conservation easement that was done for the possible farming was quite restrictive. The Town Attorney's point is that the Town would still be on the hook. They were working with a twelve page legal document. A basic one page document like we do with the RWA would be sufficient. Mr. Doheny said the Civic Association, this Commission and the Land Trust could do the charrette in the Company 8 Firehouse. It should also be open to the public per Mr. Horn.

Mr. Horn asked for a show of hands for a meeting of the public, stakeholders, etc. for ideas. Mr. Camenga said this might lead to expectations on the part of the neighbors. Dr. Doheny reminded everyone that there was no objection to Habitat doing the farmhouse. Neighbors are open and not negative, but have certain concerns about certain parts of the property.

One of the biggest charrettes Mr. Stalis is aware of is what do you want to do with downtown Manhattan. Dr. Doheny said if you are going to preserve land, you need the conservation easement. He referred to Bassett Park, which the Bassett family left to the town, with a conservation easement on it.

Mr. Horn's summary – he is talking about a gathering of people hosted perhaps by DHCA, with this Commission and the Land Trust, just to get some ideas for uses of the property. Mr. Kops said if you are going to do this, you need a structure, or it could run amok. He suggested a way to help move it forward and get people thinking the right way, would be to come up with some questions like what kind of amenities are needed in this area. Dan Camenga agreed and said if we go in this direction, and have the discussion not including the piece about the easement, it might even be helpful to engage prior to the meeting, then categorize the items that come in, and in the introductory comment section, we could share the responses. Mr. Horn suggested we use the Chronicle and an email address for the responses, or regular mail to the Commission at this address.

On line survey mechanism.

Dan Camenga said it would be helpful to know if we were going to have a conservation easement. Kops said if there is a specif proposal, we would have to figure out how to protect it best and make it a success. Kevin said we shouldn't lock ourselves into something that might not last more than a year or two.

Mr. Horn will attend the Land Trust event tomorrow night.

3. New Business: Town Property Survey

Mr. Vitali said there was nothing to report.

Mr. Stalis reported that the Town has retained a traffic consultant Fitzgerald & Halliday to do a study in the Westwoods area for traffic calming with the idea of getting input from the public to create a more livable community. Fitzgerald & Halliday completed a similar study in the Whitneyville neighborhood for the Council of Governments. The survey will be on the Town website shortly. We have to get the word out. Mr. Stalis said he looks are our roadways as part of our open space.

The Commission's annual picnic will take place at Dr. Doheny's home on July 28th. Details to follow.

4. Adjournment:

Dr. Doheny made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Lark seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

**Submitted by: _____
Gerry Tobin, Meeting Clerk**