

MINUTES: The Natural Resources & Open Space Commission held a Regular Meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 25, 2012 in the 3rd floor conference room, Hamden Government Center. The following issues were discussed:

Commissioners in Attendance: Bill Doheny, Hamilton Milroy, Richard Bell, Kevin Burgio, Dan Camenga, Peter Vitali, Mike Horn, Mike McManus

Commissioners Absent: Marigrace Larke, Aris Stalis

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

Mr. Horn called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Minutes

Review minutes of May 20, 2012

The Agenda for the May meeting said May 20th instead of May 30. change Kevin to Mr. Burgio in the document.

Mr. Doheny made a motion to approve the minutes of May 30th as amended.

Mr. Bell seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Review informal notes of June 27th

Old Business

Properties of Interest

Maselli Farm

Mr. Doheny said the Town sent out an RFP for a solar array at Maselli Farm, and there were 60 responses. On Tuesday a mandatory meeting was held on site for those that were interested and Mr. Doheny attended. About 20 people were there and they seemed very interested. They asked intelligent questions as if they planned to pursue the project. There were two cars with NY and one with NJ license plates according to Mr. Doheny. Submissions are due by 8/14. The Town will review and will start to hold meetings with the interested parties. Mr. Doheny feels that someone from this Commission and someone from the Civic

Association should be involved in the final decision. One of the Civic Association member's mother saw it in the paper. Neither the Civic Association nor this Commission were notified of the meeting.

This is the second time the solar discussions came up. Dan Kops mentioned that the Public Act that was approved in November or December talks about funding. Apparently the Town missed the deadline but will apply again in the fall. Chris Marchand was there and he seems to be the go to person. Neighbors are adamant about not using the upper four acres. The solar array should not compromise the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) being in there.

Mr. Horn said we should improve the lines of communication. Mr. Kops is in the process of drafting zoning regulations about solar panels. Wind turbines are addressed in the regulations. The State had wind companies write the regulations and they gave all authority to the Siting Council.

Survey of Town Owned Land

Since the last meeting Mr. Vitali sent Mr. Horn a series of questions. Mr. Horn said the Commission took it upon themselves to do the survey every 5 years in compilation form with a copy to Planning. It presents the property, who owns it and is there anything that needs our immediate attention. Mr. Horn thinks he has a copy of the previous report and he will give it to the subcommittee. The subcommittee is still working on the survey.

Forest Management Plan

Mr. Horn said he didn't see anything astounding in the Forest Management Plan. Mr. Camenga said it seemed well thought out. Mr. Vitali said there are a lot of good definitions in the Plan. Mike McManus sent Mr. Horn some comments including the fact that there is no mention of wildlife in the Plan. They must have bear and other wildlife. The only thing mentioned was deer browse, and birds of various kinds that would like or be happy with that habitat, but they didn't say they found so many species per acre. Coyote, fox, etc were not mentioned. Mr. Horn will forward Mr. McManus' comments to the Commissioners.

Mr. Horn asked for a motion that the Plan be approved by our Commission with the modification that we found it disappointing in the wildlife species and numbers area. Mr. Milroy so moved. Mr. Doheny seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

The ash beetle was found in Prospect and wood that comes out of a contaminated area must be chipped.

Mr. Horn reminded Commissioners about the picnic at Dr. Doheny's home on Saturday, July 28th at noon, rain or shine.

New Business

Mr. Horn mentioned last week's Post Chronicle article regarding the archery field in East Rock Park being used as a polo field. Several people have called Mr. Horn about this. Mr. Horn said the Park was originally designed by Donald Mitchell, a student of Frederick Olmstead and is on the National Registry of Historic Places. The archery field is approximately 100 by 300 feet.

Pros: adjunct association to Yale; plan to take urban youth at risk into a riding program; reduce and be a negative to adult activity in the area

Cons: no public land and access should be given to any group for their exclusive use; public land should forever for the good of all. (Mr. Horn read from John Carusone's memo.) Mr. Horn's biggest concern is the loss of the park's prime function. The topography in general is wickedly wrong for anything like that. The Park has been declared an IBA by the Audubon society, and there is a long list of birds that would be displaced. People come from all over the world in May and late April to view birds at this major eastern flyway. This is not what this park is about or meant to be. They are talking about an arena, stables, parking, roads, vehicle access, like what Yale had. This is a building, not an open field like Butterworth's. New Haven owns the park, but it is partially located in Hamden, and if they want to change the use of the park, they would have to go through Hamden's permitting procedures. Public facilities are regulated by zoning regulations and would not be exempt. Mr.

Horn would like our meeting minutes to go to New Haven's Board of Park Commissioners.

Mr. Horn suggested an area along Ella Grasso Boulevard, West River Park, which is flat, empty, wide enough (on the river side). Mr. Bell mentioned that that area is heavily used for soccer and rugby fields. Mr. Horn also mentioned East Shore Park. Mr. Camenga asked why aren't they considering land that is already built. Mr. Horn said the only thing we have seen is what we read in the paper. Mr. Kops said they have been considering various sites. Perhaps we should wait to see exactly what is being proposed. At this point it is all hearsay. How do we know it is on the part of the park that is in Hamden. Mr. Camenga said they should be looking at hardscaped property, not a park. Mr. Doheny said no one group should have exclusive use of any part of a park.

Mr. Horn said from what we have heard so far, it is a bad idea. The consensus of this Commission is that the proposed location sounds like a bad idea. Mr. Horn also asked that the Mayor's Office and Planning Office forward details to NROS once they are received.

Mr. Horn requested that the New Haven Parks Commission respond to our concerns.

Adjournment

Dr. Doheny made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Milroy seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Submitted by _____
Gerry Tobin, Meeting Clerk