



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, December 18, 2013 at 7:30 p.m. in the 3rd Floor Conference Room, Hamden Government Center. The following issues were discussed:

Commissioners in Attendance: Kevin Burgio, Richard Bell, Frank Cohen, Marigrace Larke, Mike Horn, Peter Vitali, Bill Doheny

Commissioners Absent: Jonathan Richardson, Mike McManus

Others in Attendance: Gerry Tobin, Meeting Clerk

Mr. Horn called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. and reminded Commissioners that this Commission is advisory in nature.

1. Review: Minutes of November 20, 2013

Page 1, first paragraph, first line, change Mr. Richardson to "Dr." Richardson

Page 3, last paragraph under New Business. Change last sentence to: Dr. Doheny met with Senator Crisco and Representatives Sharkey, Zupkis and Klarides, ...

Dr. Doheny made a motion to accept the minutes as corrected. Mr. Vitali seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

2. Continuing Business:

A. Masselli property and other properties of interest C.I.A. grants

Dr. Doheny reported that Public Works has gone out to the Maselli property and cleaned up the growth of saplings around the barn. The Town has the \$5,000 grant to repair the barn roof, but he isn't sure where it sits right now, or whether they plan to do an RFP of just hire someone to do the job.

Dr. Doheny spoke to Mayor Jackson about applying for the agriculture grant to do a study of the farm. He also gave the Mayor information and forms to apply for the CIA grant for the Bednarzyk property. Mr. Horn asked how we get the state involved. Mr. Doheny meets with the CT Forest and Parks people every other month at Rockfall in Middletown. Dr. Doheny is awaiting direction from the Mayor's Office. In January he is supposed to sit down with Rep. Sharkey. The CIA (Connecticut Investment Act) funds come from the real estate conveyance tax.

At last month's meeting Dr. Doheny talked about the state selling off some land. He distributed a copy of an article from the Forest and Park Association publication that is a summary of what he tried to explain last time. This is on the agenda for the Land Conservation Council. Ms. Larke mentioned that it is important to attend these meetings and talk to the people in Hartford, and keep Hamden's face out there.

There was further discussion on state budget issues.

Ms. Larke asked if the CT Farm Trust was a private organization and Dr. Doheny replied that it was.

Years ago a conservation easement was developed for the Masselli Farm. Hopefully the study will give the Town a better idea as to what the possibilities are for development of the Farm. Ms. Larke feels a forest would be a good idea. Dr. Doheny mentioned sustainable logging, and said there is a lot of money to be made. Dr. Doheny said perhaps there will be legislation regarding logging in the state forests.

There was no news on other properties of interest.

B. East Rock polo field – continued vigilance

C. Olin Powder Farm / Five Lakes Park – continued vigilance

D. NROS recruitment efforts – Mr. Horn said the recruitment article has been successful. We are expecting another new member, who will bring the Commission back up to 10 out of 11 members.

The Connecticut Land Conservation Council invited the Commission to join their organization for a small fee. Dr. Doheny is a member. Dr. Doheny said he doesn't think we should join because we would have to ask the Town to pay. He would encourage members to join personally. It is an umbrella Council that takes positions legislatively. It is the best lobbying group because there are enough people there and organizations with paid staff that can go to Hartford and spend time with legislators.

Vegetation Management Plan by UI

Mr. Horn brought up the United Illuminating plan to remove trees along power line rights of way out to 8', which will prevent power outages caused by trees/branches falling on power lines during storms. They plan to cut down trees that they deem a danger and plant other trees in their planting plan, small shorter trees. Marty Mador sent this article to Mr. Horn. Mr. Mador feels that this plan will cost new haven 50% of their trees. Mr. Horn asked him about Hamden, and he replied 20%. People who successfully object to the trees being cut, if that tree causes damage, the UI will go after the property owner and/or the municipality. This is all by order of the state. Mr. Vitali said CLP is already doing this. They will have tree wardens. The Mayor has already received phone calls on this, and the garden club had an article in the New Haven register about it. Discussion ensued. Mr. Horn said they plan to spend \$10,000,000 over eight years on this project. Mr. Horn would like to see some of this money used for conduit burial.

Dr. Doheny asked Attorney Bell if the UI can do this by fiat, or do they need permission from the town. Attorney Bell is not sure of the answer, but feels that they can do whatever they want in their right of way which goes from the center of the earth to the heavens.

There was discussion on the tree wardens making the decisions on which trees would be removed. Dr. Doheny said in the bill he saw the requirements for tree wardens were quite extensive.

Mr. Horn said in summary – the UI would like to cut down on power outages and this is the plan they have come up with. Conduit burying was not mentioned once. Trees will be replaced with appropriate smaller trees.

Mr. Cohen told about rangers at Sleeping Giant searching for someone but not giving much information to the public that was trying to hike there. He said they were riding around on their three wheelers kicking up dirt, etc. riding standing up like a bunch of kids and made a mess of the trail.

Mr. Vitali said this UI Plan was brought up and what is the purpose of that to this Commission. Mr. Horn replied that anything that affects the natural resources (trees) of Hamden is of interest to this Commission.

4. Adjournment:

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

Submitted by: _____

Gerry Tobin, Meeting Clerk