

# Natural Resources & Open Space Commission

## Minutes of April 30, 2014 Meeting

Commissioners in Attendance: Frank Cohen, Mike Horn, Bill Doheny, Richard Pearce, Kevin Burgio, Mike McManus, Jonathan Richardson, Marigrace Larke

Commissioners Excused: Peter Vitali, Dick Bell

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

### 1. Review minutes of February 26, 2014

Mr. Horn said he canceled the March meeting because there was not much to discuss, but he will not cancel two months in a row. Commissioners said they did not receive the minutes of the February meeting, and review was tabled to the May 28<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Mr. Horn has been trying to get a person from the bird club to fill the 11<sup>th</sup> spot on the Commission. Dr. Richardson said he has found a permanent position on the staff of Providence College starting in late July or early August, so he will be resigning from the Commission at that time.

### 2. Continuing Business

#### A. Maselli Farm

Dr. Doheny received a call today from Julie Smith in the Mayor's Office regarding the Maselli Farm. Requests for proposals are being mailed out tomorrow to get started on the roof. A couple of people suggested that since it is an historic structure and we will be going for more grants for restoration of the barn, please make sure the appropriate roof is put on the building. Several people have recommended a person who has done work for the Historical Society and historic buildings in other locations. The grant to study the rest of the farm has one more piece of paperwork to go and fortunately the person that Ms. Smith was told to send it to is the person he has been working with for the past couple of years. He and others had planned a meeting to push the issue. Next week they will have someone from the Farmland Trust come to Hamden. Dr. McManus will also attend, as will Ms. Smith.

Dr. Doheny said if we don't get the study done soon enough to tell us the appropriate use of the Maselli Farm, we will lose another year. There are grant cycles, and we have to have this done by October to get into the next grant cycle

Mr. Pearce asked if the Connecticut Trust is providing any money for technical assistance for this site. Dr. Doheny said we will get that assistance from the CT Department of Agriculture. The Governor is pushing for agriculture preservation. The time is right, the money is there, so the stars may align for us next year to get going on this. Mr. Richardson asked what the ultimate plan is and Dr. Doheny replied that is what the study is for, to determine the future use of the farm. The people in the Dunbar Hill neighborhood want to have four acres at the top for public use with picnic tables, etc. To get to the barn, take Benham to Gilbert Avenue and right where it makes a turn, the barn is there. The property is full of Autumn Olive, rose bushes, poison ivy, etc., so it is difficult to walk the property. The Town has promised to send in the brush hog, but has not done so to date. There are state and federal funds available for clearing land.

### 3. Properties of Interest

Mr. Horn said Mr. Kops is not here so we have no other property news. Dr. Doheny said the Town is

still toying with the Bednarzyk property.

Ms. Larke said Frederick Schramm of the Energy Use & Climate Change Commission asked about the property behind the log cabin. He is under the impression that the Town is not interested in this 50.4 acres. Mr. Horn said this property was formerly a clay mine with a dyke around it and pumps to get the clay out. When the miners left, Attorney Ginsburg formed an LLC to try to get it active again. The Town is just waiting for him to walk away, but he has been paying his taxes. The pond became brackish and is now just a tidal pond shaped like the letter C. The property probably abuts the Quinipiac wildlife area. Attorney Ginsberg spent a lot of money to have a rail crossing installed, but it has since been removed. The area is good for birding. There are all sorts of waterfowl on the property. Osprey and bald eagles fish there.

Ms. Larke said Mr. Schramm told her there was a big oil spill (intentional) that had something to do with one of the local crime families. Most of that area was remediated, but the area into the woods south of the Detroit Steel property has not been cleaned. The property is appropriate for wildlife open space.

East Rock polo field – Mr. Horn mentioned continued vigilance in that location. He said there was a plan to put a polo field in East Rock Park.

Olin Powder Farm - Five Lakes Park – Mr. Horn said that area will be remediated once the remediation in Newhallville has been completed.

#### 4. Old Business

UI's Management Plan – Mr. Horn said this plan has been withdrawn.

Dr. Doheny said a bunch of trees were cut on Denslow Hill Road. Mr. Cole of the UI told him they stopped cutting trees in Hamden. Mr. Horn saw a road in Killingworth where many large trees were removed and stacked. Ms. Larke said UI is doing pole checks in the region, starting in Hamden and moving to Woodbridge next. If they see UI poles that need replacing, they will replace them.

#### 5. New Business

We will continue to recruit for one last opening on the Commission. Another vacancy will come up at the end of summer.

Ms. Larke mentioned that Kim Acampora of 42 Sunwood Circle was complaining bitterly. They Association is paying taxes on a portion of their land that can't be built on. Dr. Doheny said this is a cluster home association, and the land is part of their property. That was the deal when the development was approved.

#### Earth Day Report

Ms. Larke said this was another very nice successful program and probably had 3,000 people in attendance. Ms. Larke spent the day at the Commission's table and had a craft for kids. There was further discussion on the Town's Earth Day celebration.

Dr. Doheny got a phone call from Speaker Sharkey about the 30 acre YMCA camp, which they are considering selling. He asked him to go out and inspect it and make recommendations. They will go out later this week. He has spoken to the deputy commissioner. Our last acquisition with the state was the 25 acre Sablitz property which is adjacent to this parcel. Dr. McManus did a management plan for that camp several years ago. The YMCA parcel because of its position on the map is of interest to the

Town of Hamden. Dr. Doheny will report next month. This brings us up to 100 acres pending for open space.

There was also mention of the Gargiulo parcel off of State Street with a billboard on it, which brings in money.

Adjournment

**Dr. Doheny made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Pearce seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.**

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