

## NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

MINUTES: The Natural Resources & Open Space Commission held a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, February 26, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. in the third floor conference room, Hamden Government Center. The following issues were discussed:

Commissioners in Attendance: Dr. Doheny, Mr. Horn, Mr. Pearce, Ms. Larke, Mr. Bell, Mr. Cohen, Dr. McManus, Mr. Burgio, Dr. Richardson

Commissioners Excused: Mr. Vitali

Guest: Mr. Parlapiano

Others in Attendance: Assistant Town Planner Dr. Kops, Commission Clerk Ms. Tobin

Call to Order

Mr. Horn called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Review Minutes of 1/29/14

On Page two, 4<sup>th</sup> line from bottom, change take to taken.

**Dr. Doheny made a motion to approve the minutes of January 29, 2014, Dr. McManus seconded the motion. Mr. Pearce and Mr. Burgio abstained. The vote was seven in favor.**

Continuing Business

Dr. Kops said there is no news to report on the Masselli Farm grant for a consultant, except that it has been favorably received. Dr. Doheny said he will be meeting with Speaker Sharkey tomorrow and could mention it. Dr. Kops said that is not necessary at this time.

Dr. Doheny asked for an update on negotiations on the Bednarzyk property. Dr. Kops said it is in his court now, and he has to go through the purchasing process to hire an appraiser.

Mr. Horn said the commission continues its vigilance regarding the East Rock Polo Field.

There is no news on Olin/Fire Lakes Park

United Illuminating Tree Plan

The commission reviewed the proposed motion:

**Dr. Doheny made a motion that the Natural Resources and Open Space Commission endorses the position of the Hamden Alliance for Trees that the Town of Hamden needs to balance protecting the electric grid and power delivery for residences and businesses with the need to preserve the Town's urban forest/tree scape and the environmental, economic, societal and aesthetic benefits that healthy trees provide to enhance the quality of life in Hamden. Mr. Pearce seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.**

Earth Day – April 12, 2014

Ms. Larke has submitted the application for the commission's participation in Earth Day and requested a table. She will attend an Earth Day meeting on Thursday. Mr. Horn mentioned having a service animal as part of the commission's display. Ms. Larke will pick up some handouts and get the maps from Dr. Kops. We have one more meeting prior to Earth Day. Mr. Horn said we can display eagle

pictures on a laptop. There will probably be a bird walk. There was discussion on the effect of the weather on the maple syrup. Dr. Richardson said his wife teaches first grade, and perhaps we could have an activity like leaf rubbing for bookmarks, or something like that. Ms. Larke said we can ask for a second table for crafts. She will also ask for money for craft supplies (under \$100). Mr. Horn has been taking pictures of birds and said they are mating early.

We now have ten commissioners and need one more for a full commission.

#### New Business

Dr. Doheny mentioned that on Tuesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, Friends of Connecticut State Parks is having their annual gathering in the Legislative Office Building at the Capitol. Representatives from 20 different parks groups will be there. Commissioners are invited to come by. Noon is the best time.

If anyone wants to get involved, Friends are picking two critical environmental issues this year. One is to try to work out a mechanism for preserving the lands the state already has. Right now, there are no protections for those lands. He mentioned the two areas where ownership of state land was transferred. Currently this does not even require a public hearing. Dr. Doheny and others are meeting with Speaker Sharkey tomorrow. On 90% of the state owned properties there are no conservation easements. Right now if the state decides they want to give away the land on top of Sleeping Giant for a tower, they could do that. Dr. Doheny asked commissioners to talk this up among friends and legislators. Back in 1990 the state commissioned \$150,000 to survey the DEP and all of the lands to see what was needed for staffing and for infrastructure. They felt it would take 600 plus people to manage the parks. Right now there are 52. There are more groundskeepers in the state capital than there are to take care of our state parks. He said the biggest problem now with DEEP is that energy has been put into it, and the person in charge is an energy person, so parks have taken a back seat. Several New Haven area parks were mentioned that are managed out of Osborndale and the manager has properties in that area to take care of. He has eight people. If you have to call a conservation officer, your wait time now is 2.5 hours.

Another thing the Friends are going to push tomorrow - currently all of the admission fees and enterprise funds go to the general fund. None of it goes back to the parks. Four years ago there were various park groups that had raised money (Harkness raised \$200,000) and there was a fund for \$1.2 million for West Rock. The state swept the funds to balance the budget.

United Illuminating is hosting another public session at Hamden Middle School on March 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. Several of our legislators are planning to be in attendance.

Dr. McManus mentioned that he read something about the parks keeping 50% of the funds they raise. Dr. Doheny said we've gone down this road before. At one time the parks had about \$2 million. The state had funded \$8 million. When the state saw that parks had the \$2 million, they decided they only had to fund \$6 million.

#### Adjournment

**Dr. Doheny made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Pearce seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.**

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gerry Tobin