

Minutes: The Natural Resources & Open Space Commission held a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, July 29, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. in the third floor conference room, Hamden Government Center. The following issues were discussed:

Commissioners in Attendance: Aris Stalis, Ted Kennedy, Mike D, Hamilton Milroy, Mike Horn, Bill Doheny, Marigrace Lark, Dick Bell

Absent: Gwen Emery, Peter Vitali, Tom Parlapiano

Others in Attendance: Ron Walters, Dan Kops, Gerry Tobin

Call to Order

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

Minutes

Dr. Doheny made a motion to accept the minutes of June 24, 2009. Mr. Bell seconded the motion. The minutes were accepted unanimously.

Old Business

Properties of Interest

Mr. Kops had nothing to report except that the Mayor had the Stahnke file for review. There was no news on the Clay Pit, Podgewaite, or DeNardis properties.

Dr. Doheny reported that on Saturday, August 29th from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. there will be a presentation of the Commission's Green Award at the Maselli Farm. Light refreshments will be served. Mike Horn and Bill Doheny will be there. Dr. Doheny said they are hoping to get Public Works in there to clean it up. The house and two barns will be open, and if the trail is cleaned up we will be able to walk it.

The shepherd is out because we aren't going to meet his deadline.

On Monday, August 3rd the Legislative Council is having a public hearing on the Maselli Farm at 6:30 in Thornton Wilder Hall (½ hour) to get public input. They are starting their meeting ½ hour earlier than normal. One of the main recommendations of the committee is that a conservation easement be given to the Land Trust, and hopefully we can get a motion as such.

Mr. Horn called for a motion that a conservation easement on the Maselli Property be given to the Hamden Land Trust. Mr. Bell asked if this easement would be specific to the property. Mr. Kops said it preserves the property as is. Mr. Kennedy asked if this would limit some of the uses of the land. Dr. Doheny said Curt Johnson is working on the proper form. Agricultural use for

profit/non profit would be permitted, and possibly the house and barn would be excluded from it and two acres would be reserved for municipal use (animal shelter). This is a recommendation of the study committee.

Mr. Bell said this is a good idea but the devil is in the details. Dr. Doheny said we want to let the Council know that the conservation easement to the Land Trust is a good idea. Once the conservation easement is drawn up the Town Attorney would review it, followed by review by this Commission and then it would go to the Planning Section for an 8-24 review. They would give a favorable recommendation to the Council with a majority vote or an unfavorable recommendation, which would require a 2/3 vote.

Mr. Milroy made a motion that a Conservation Easement be formulated for the Maselli Property with the intent that it be given to the Hamden Land trust when approved. Ms. Larke seconded the motion. The vote was seven in favor following discussion. Dr. Doheny abstained.

Mr. Bell was going to suggested that we think a conservation easement is a good idea and the commission wishes to see this pursued vigorously. Ms. Larke isn't sure that she doesn't want to see the barn included. Mr. Doheny said if a use is not found for the barn, it could become a liability for the Town. The architectural historian said you could spend about \$80,000 to restore the barn, so if we could get someone who wanted to live in the house and maybe restore the barn, that could work. Perhaps some of the people that are going to farm there might want to use part of the house. The property is in an R-4 zone.

New Business

Mr. Horn asked if anyone attended the meeting regarding the changes to the Plan of Conservation and Development. Mr. Stalis said there is still a lot of public hesitation to move forward with the plan. He didn't really think there was anything new. Mr. Kops said the comments are usually neighborhood specific. 6-7000 letters were sent out to abutting property owners. He felt they had micro concerns regarding their individual properties and/or their street, Mix, Treadwell, Dixwell, Putnam, etc., where they are concerned that if the zone is changed to T3 or T4, more businesses could come in and change the character of their neighborhoods. There were people from Spring Glen against Smart Code. There were no comments against the protection of open space, which are better protected with the changes. The Commission will answer the 15 or so questions raised by the public. T3, 4 and 5 are mixed use zones, and regulations actually conform to what is already there. There are 183 pages on the Town's web site, along with maps. Mr. Stalis thinks the changes provide a lot of opportunity for properties that are already developed. Mr. Kops said the burden of property tax falls mostly on residential property owners, and most of the land in Town is developed. This is an opportunity to increase commercial uses throughout the Town, without the need for the large parking lots. The land could be put to better use.

Mr. Horn said Peter Vitali asked last month if we have an inventory of open space, Table 9 from 2002, page 34 of the Hamden Plan of Conservation and Development. Mr. Horn asked for copy. Mr. Kops said he will find it. There is currently a proposal to amend the Plan to add form based zoning and the village districts.

There was discussion on the misinformation contained in pullout section of the Post Chronicle a couple of weeks ago.

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

Submitted by: _____
Gerry Tobin, Meeting Clerk