



# TOWN OF HAMDEN

## CONNECTICUT

### NATURAL RESOURCES & OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

**MINUTES:** The Natural Resources & Open Space Commission held a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, February 24, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. in the third floor conference room, Hamden Government Center. The following issues were discussed:

Commissioners in Attendance: Mr. Vitali, Mr. Horn, Mr. McManus, Mr. Doheny, Mr. Milroy, Mr. Bell, Ms. Larke, Mr. Camenga

Commissioners Absent: Mr. Stalis (excused), Mr. Kennedy (excused)

Also in Attendance: Assistant Town Planner Dan Kops  
Acting Commission Peggy Craft

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

#### **Review Minutes of January 27, 2009**

There were no additions deletions or correction to be made and Chairman Horn called for a motion to approve the Minutes as presented. **Mr. Milroy made a motion to approve the minutes of January 27th as presented. Mr. Doheny seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.**

#### **Old Business**

Mr. Horn said that he invited the Mayor to our meeting, but he is was unable to attend. calming meeting

Regarding the Stanke property, Commissioner Doheny said he spoke to Mayor Jackson on Tuesday, and learned that the reason this was pulled from the Legislative Council was because of the back taxes owed on the property. It had been believed that this was less than \$1,500 but it now seems to be more with penalties added. Commissioner Doheny doesn't think the owner is going to pay the taxes. Mr. Doheny added that if the Town condemns the property they would incur large legal fees. He feels it would be better to just take the property.

Next, Mr. Doheny showed a map of the Stanke Property in relation to properties that have already been acquired. Mr. Doheny feels we should take this property with a quick claim not a warranty deed as was suggested to the Mayor. The Mayor felt this could set a bad precedent. There was a discussion regarding the reason for the back taxes. The Mayor did feel that the quick claim makes sense. There was a discussion of the history of acquiring open space land in this area. The Town has acquired 287 acres and another 40 acres with the Shanunk Property. The State has acquired 67 acres, and the RWA has acquired 64 acres with the Crosby Property. Commissioner Vitali asked about other properties in the area, such as the Podwaite Property. There was a discussion of these properties.

Other areas that have been acquired are the Benedict Property (the gravel pit) and a small strip mall. The Mayor will follow up on and Mr. Doheny will stay in contact with him regarding it.

Mr. Vitali asked where the clay pit is. Mr. Horn said it is located on State Street near the log cabin building. Mr. Horn said the dyke has been breached and it is now completely tidal. He added that it is a lovely environment for wildlife but not much else can be done with it. He said we are waiting for Attorneys Ginsberg to decide what they will do with it. Mr. Milroy asked if there is a wildlife area near there. Mr. Horn said there is an undefined area there. He said hopefully it would eventually be turned over to the Town.

Next, Mr. Vitali asked what our interest is in Five Lakes Park. Mr. Horn said this started in 2000. This property is the former Olin Power Farm. He was made aware of this through a DEP employee. Mr. Horn was told that the DEP has been sitting on this because of the remediation costs. As time passed the cost of remediation has risen. Mr. Horn said that the current status of the property is that Olin lets people tour the property twice a year. It is locked at all other times. This property will be remediated but after the Newhall area remediation. It was added that this would take a very long time. There was a discussion regarding what needs to be remediated. Mr. Horn said there is arsenic, lead iron, etc. in the soil. Mr. Doheny said that Lake Whitney is right next to this property, and according to the RWA there is nothing coming out into the lake. Mr. Horn said that the wildlife there is awesome, and added that he saw the largest snapping turtles he had ever seen. He said there are many wild animals on the property.

Next there was a discussion regarding the Maselli Farm. Mr. Doheny has had three meetings with the Mayor regarding an RFP for the farmers. The procedure for the RFP was discussed. Mr. Kops said that as of Monday the RFP was still on the Purchasing Agents desk. He added that it is not quite fleshed out yet. Mr. Kops said it is being worked on and should be out this week. They will try to get it to the Legislative Council by the first of April. There was further discussion regarding the RFP and the use of the land by the three farmers that are currently interested. Also, included in the discussion was whether others will be allowed in, or do we have to wait for the RFP. The Town Attorney has said that a survey is needed.

Mr. Kops noted that only \$7,500 dollars rent per year could be collected for the entire piece of property. According to the purchase agreement only 10% of the price the Town paid for the property can be collected per year for rent. This agreement is for 20 years. There was a discussion regarding what the farmers would be charged, and would they be required to have insurance.

Next there was a discussion regarding a conservation easement. The Town Attorney has raised objections to a conservation easement for the Farmington Canal. It gives the Land Trust an inordinate amount of control over land, but the Town still has liability because they still own it. Mr. Doheny suggested that the farm be given to the Land Trust, and that a farming conservation easement not be given. He said the Land Trust could be given a straight easement for preservation of the land. There was further discussion regarding these easements. Mr. Doheny said the main thing is to get a conservation easement on this property. Mr. Horn suggested that the fee for CSAs be waived. Mr. Kops said if the land were being used by farmers to make money the Town would then be lax in not charging them.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the RFP and how long this will take. There was a discussion regarding this process. Mr. Doheny said this would take until April. He feels that we should be able to just do this with the three farmers who have already applied.

Mr. Milroy asked about the possible location of an animal shelter on the Dadio Property. Mr. Kops said there are four lots there, and there is a proposal to take one lot out and construct an Animal Shelter. Mr. Milroy noted that one of the lots is owned by Ninth District Council Person Lynn Campo. There was a short discussion regarding this.

### **New Business:**

At the last meeting Richard Bell and the Commission discussed a stream flow exhibition that Mr. Horn and Mr. Bell attended. Mr. Bell wrote a letter to be passed on regarding this demonstration. Mr. Horn read the letter (attached) into the record.

There was a short discussion regarding new properties.

Next, Mr. Horn discussed Earth Day. Meeting Clerk, Gerry Tobin, has volunteered her laptop computer to download Mr. Horn's pictures of the Maselli Property for Earth Day. Mr. Walters of RWA will make Maselli Property maps and laminate them for display. Mr. Horn said anyone who would like to come and sit at the desk would be welcome. Mr. Horn will be busy with Dr. Mel and Wind over Wings. He needs volunteers to watch the laptop and answer questions. Mr. Kops said the P&Z Town map could be used as well as their easels. Mr. Camenga and Ms. Larke will attend.

There was a discussion regarding the barn, and if Mr. Horn felt he would like to go inside. Mr. Doheny will get the key for it if he does. There was also a discussion regarding the house and what could be done with the property. It is claimed that this house was built in 1880 though this is in question. It could be closer to 1900. Mr. Doheny said that he cannot get an answer from the Town regarding what can be done with the house. He has spoken to the Mayor, the Town Attorney and five Council Members.

Mr. Horn discussed Wind over Wings that will be at Earth Day. He also discussed seeing a pair of Eagles in the State Street area.

### **Adjournment**

There was no further business to come before the Commission and Chairman Horn called for a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Doheny motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Milroy seconded the motion that passed unanimously.** Chairman Horn adjourned the meeting at 8:47 PM.

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Peggy Craft, Acting Meeting Clerk

