

NATURAL RESOURCES & OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Minutes: The Natural Resources & Open Space Commission, Town of Hamden, held a Regular Meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 15, 2010 in the 3rd floor conference room, Hamden Government Center. The following issues were discussed:

Commissioners in Attendance: Daniel Camenga, Aris Stalis, Peter Vitali, Mike Horn, Bill Doheny, Hamilton Milroy, Marigrace Larke, Richard Bell

Commissioners Absent: Ted Kennedy (excused), Mike McManus (excused)

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

Review Minutes of November 17, 2010

add to Commissioners Absent, Bill Doheny (excused), and Aris Stalis

Page 2, bottom, remove extra letter t in first line of last paragraph

Page 2, last paragraph, after 2011, add “does” and after options add ?

Page 3, just prior to vote, change to “Mr. Camenga asked what body is currently in a position to move this forward.”

Mr. Bell made a motion to approve the minutes of November 17, 2010 as amended. Mr. Vitali seconded the motion. The vote was 7 in favor, Mr. Stalis abstained.

Mr. Horn reminded commissioners Larke, Bell and Kennedy that their appointments expire soon, and to send letters requesting reappointment along with new resumes to Clerk Tobin.

Old Business

Mr. Horn mentioned that at last month's meeting, Dr. McManus said that he is going to ask the Natural Resources Conservation Service about potential grant funding (for Land Trust, not Town) and to provide us with conservation easement wording. Mr. Horn has no news on that subject.

McMann Property – Mr. Kops had no news to report.

DeMatteo Property – Mr. Kops reported there was no news.

Masselli Property – Mr. Horn said at the November meeting, we decided to urge action on the Masselli Property. At last meeting the subject of Habitat for Humanity rehabbing the house, and the onus being on Mr Rosabianca to move forward came up.

State Street Property – is moving forward (Clay Pits) We have heard from the owners, and the Mayor has asked Town Counsel to look into this. There was discussion regarding enhancement of the access to the Quinnipiac River, which would be difficult at this location as it crosses the train tracks. Mr. Camenga said the Land Trust did a tour of the State Street property, and he will ask their opinion. Mr. Horn thinks it would be nice for the Town to take the property and give it to the state since state land abuts both sides of this property. There is a lot of state land there (Quinnipiac River Marsh Wild Life Area). Mr. Horn explained that several years ago a large deposit of usable industrial clay was found, which they started to mine, and then they hit a fresh water aquifer. They built dikes to keep salt water out, stopped mining, stopped pumping fresh water out, and fresh water filled the hole. There is a great fish population. Ten years ago, there was a breach allowing the fresh water to flow out, and the whole thing is now salt/tidal. This is a waterfowl magnet. The consensus of the Commission is for the Town to accept the property and turn it over to the state, perhaps in trade for something else. In the 90's the Ginsbergs wanted to develop their property as a clay mine because their clay could be used for

tennis courts. They were either turned down by Inland Wetlands or were about to be turned down. It has lain fallow since.

Mr. Camenga asked what is the precedent for the state trading land, and Mr. Horn responded they do it all the time.

Mr. Doheny reported that the Sablitz property is back in probate court, and the closing has not taken place. Hopefully the problem will be solved. Dr. Doheny said the Town could take the clay pit site, and there are other properties in play where we might want to partner with the state.

Dr. Doheny said that the liability issue is not clear, and to get clarification of Chapter 925, #52-557f will be one of the legislative items this year. He referred to the MDC case. MDC thought they had immunity under the act, but the court said they did not. This is also an issue with the Masselli Farm.

Dr. Doheny mentioned the discussion in last month's minutes regarding the Maselli farm, where bid waivers were mentioned. We are not asking for a low bid, and what was referred to as a bid waiver could be in favor of a Request for Proposal or Request for Qualifications. Dr. Doheny also noted that we discussed the DeMatteo farm being proposed as open space, and he mentioned that it should be a low priority as the property would not likely be developed. There was discussion on the flooding that takes place on the site. This will be left off of the docket for the time being.

Dr. Doheny talked to Rich DePodesta about his father's land. He is not interested in donating it, and Mr. DePodesta mentioned some ideas for development.

Dr. Doheny feels that in the next year the Town will purchase 100 acres of open space land.

There was no further old business.

New Business

Dan Camenga went to the land academy last month. It was interesting and helpful to him. He spent the better part of the day at Central, where they had sessions on zoning, and various issues. He felt the most interesting was the review of the commissions and where they fall in the statutes.

There was discussion on Town owned open space land. Mr. Horn said the last time we reviewed Town held open space, he and Tom Parlapiano looked at every piece physically about 5 years ago. Mr. Horn said this Commission made several suggestions for the plan of development

Mr. Horn said we should review of all Town owned open space some time in the Spring of 2011. We will bring this up as new business at the next meeting. Dr. Doheny said it would be important for anyone who wanted to look at potential open space if it came up, to know who owns the adjacent properties (state owned, RWA, etc.)

The Town includes schools and cemeteries as open space. He said of the 6,000 acres of Town owned open space land in Hamden, 1,000 acres are not.

Mr. Camenga brought up invasive species. Mr. Stalis suggested we categorize the open spaces. Mr. Horn said he and Mr. Parlapiano found it all and looked at it all.

Mr. Stalis asked if it is possible to pull up a map of the Town on GIS and ask it to pull up all Town owned parcels. Mr. Kops said it would not be a meaningful set of data because of all of the sliver parcels. Dr. Doheny said we probably should make a definition of open space.

Dr. Doheny made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Stalis seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

**Submitted by: _____
Gerry Tobin, Meeting Clerk**