

Minutes of the Conservation Commission August 19, 2008

Present

Howard Reid
David O'Brien
Sheila Stoane
Karen Swartz
Katchen Coley
Michael Ennis
Eric Mosier
Jane Braverman

Member of the Public

Arlene Rich

Meeting started at 7:22PM.

Public Forum:

Arlene declined to speak at the time, stating that she wanted to hear what the Commission had to say about the Boardman Lane property.

Minutes of the July 10th meeting:

Katchen moved to approve. Eric seconded the motion. All present were in favor.

Old Business

Farm Viability Study: Katchen thought that there were two parts of the project.

1. To inventory farms
2. To develop plans for assisting farmers market.

She asked Bill. He said no. Then Stephen Endes said the answer was not no. We ran out of time. Bill also told Jane that #2 was not part of the project. Sheila will find out. Katchen has a copy of the grant, and she will try to find it so we can review it.

*Note Sheila called Bill Fri. and asked about the study. He said that the grant was for an inventory of available farm land and a study on how to do a farmers market.

Open Space Status No news.

Community Garden: No news.

Army Base Reserve Center: Arlene Rich (WRA) wants to collaborate with the Commission. The WRA board wants to find other appropriate properties.

Katchen spoke with Colonel Landry . He expects to know the size requirements of the base soon. Also, he expects to know the interpretation of "Middletown if suitable" clause and which wetlands agency is the Army subject to. Someone said that they are subject to the Clean Water Act. Katchen is sending requests for the answers to these two points.

Congressional delegations are also pursuing answers to these questions. Rosa DeLauro wrote a letter to the Army, listing 10 questions including these two, and she has not as yet heard back from the Army.

Jane said that the Boardman Lane site needs to be protected. We need to come up with a strategy for that. The size of the site requirements for the Army base has been reduced, and now the process will be re-opened, with many more possible sites. The Mayor is advocating for the site to be in Maromas.

Discussion ensued regarding former Pratt and Whitney property and the potential for sewer expansion into Maromas.

Arlene Rich said the Army is now saying that they would consider a brownfield clean-up site. There were discrepancies in the reported budgeted amount for this.

Katchen said the Commission needs to remain involved.

Sheila said we should have an agreement with WRA, so that we can work together and find a location that is least damaging to the environment.

There was a discussion about ecological assessment of potential sites.

There will be a meeting of the Army Base people and the public at Mercy High School Aug 27 at 7PM.

At 7:45, Arlene Rich departed.

Open Space Status

Michael discussed the Hubbard and Brock proposals. There has been no response from DEP as yet.

We need to find out what happened to the land locked acre parcel on River road.

Conservation Corner

The most recent Chronicle had Kate Miller's article about the POCD process. Michael volunteered to write the next article. Karen will write an article about corporate environmentalism in Middletown.

Trail Guide

We need a new logo. The artist will be at the Sept. meeting.

CVH: No news

Vets Park: No news

Grecco Estate proposal

Sheila attended a meeting with Grecco lawyers and Bill Warner.

Milane Nursery

There was no response from Milane on the questions that the Commission had asked.

Kleen Energy

The power plant is being constructed.

Other Old Business

Michael asked about the Palmer field parking lot.

Jane said design changes were made and the new plans were approved. It will be smaller and further away from the river than originally proposed.

POCD

Eric : Open Space Subcommittee met and discussed recommendations to expand the map with a list of parcels. They developed a criteria for doing this. The Criteria guidelines are attached to the minutes of this meeting. Discussion followed about language that would include all parcels on the Farm Viability study in the POCD. Katchen will determine if this can be done.

Eric has created new maps based on revisions that had been discussed at the last meeting. Eric reviewed the maps with the Commission. If all the parcels are added, there will be a total of 1412 acres of additional eligible land.

Discussion ensues on whether or not to propose industrial zoned land for POCD preservation.

Motion by Michael:

We recommend that the Planning and Zoning Commission add the 1412 acres listed on the map in green as new conservation eligible land for the proposed POCD. Additionally, we recommend that language be included in the POCD that states that land identified in the Farm Viability Study be designated as eligible for open space preservation.

The motion was seconded by Katchen. It passed unanimously.