



CONSERVATION COMMISSION
City of Ansonia
CONNECTICUT 06401

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TOWN AND CITY CLERK
ANSONIA, CONNECTICUT

September 15, 2015

Regular Meeting

Present: William Urban, Chairman
Randy Carroll
Joseph Cassetti
Frank Pergola

Absent: John Jones
Tim Holman

The regular meeting of the Ansonia Conservation Commission was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chairman Urban.

All present rose and Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

The secretary called the roll and there was a quorum present.

Public Session

Chairman Urban asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to address the Commission.

Mr. Joe Cassetti introduced Mary Ann (Machowski) Swiatek.

Mary Ann (Machowski) Swiatek
360 Coachmans Lane
Orange, CT 06477

Ms. Swiatek said she is here to discuss 135 Hill Street. She is not sure of the exact acreage of the property and the access is on Shortell Drive. She said she is one of the beneficiaries for the Machowski Estate. She said that Nobel Proctor, who was a world renowned wildlife naturalist

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lived across the street. Mr. Proctor wrote many manuals and books on birds and animal life and on plant life. She said the bottom line is she is unofficially proposing that the use of the land be acquired as Open Space to be preserved for the wildlife habit on the land. She said her Uncle Casmir Machowski passed away ten years ago and he kept the land as open space during his life time. She said they have had developers looking at it, the economy tanked and there was no interest. The land was not meant to be developed. The 2008 Conservation Plan states there is a scarcity of open space in Ansonia. She said there is a special place in their hearts for Ansonia and the site lends itself to be left as open space. Her Uncle was a talented tool & die maker and he loved that land and the wildlife. The land has ties to Ansonia history and culture and it enhances the quality of life for the residents and the wildlife. She said Ansonia really doesn't need more residential housing and everything happens for a reason. She said they have been paying taxes on the property even though it was declared Open Space many years ago. She said that they have been getting the run around.

Mr. Carroll stated that Planning & Zoning had nothing before them even though it was on their agenda. He said he asked P&Z if the Section 8-24 referral was about open space. Ms. O'Malley said yes. He said that P&Z had nothing before them to review. He said at the P&Z meeting that he was from Conservation Commission and he asked them to refer 135 Hill St. and Pine Lot to the Conservation Commission and to send the package with all of the information on those properties to the Conservation Commission for review. He said the Chair of P&Z said he would send copies to Conservation Commission and to the Land Trust. He asked Ms. Swiatek if she could provide copies of the land to Conservation Commission.

Ms. Swiatek said that she spoke with Corporation Counsel Marini and he told her that the Board of Aldermen needed the Section 8-24 referral from P&Z before any action could be taken. She said that Jo Machowski sent a package over to the City.

Mr. Carroll said the Section 8-24 referral will be referred to the Conservation Commission and to the Land Use Committee. He said he will go back to P&Z and ask for a package for Conservation as it has been a month and he hasn't received anything from them.

Ms. Swiatek said Corporation Counsel Marini said he has to do that.

Mr. Carroll said that it is Conservation's responsibility to look into this matter. They haven't given us a package and they are negating their responsibility to Conservation.

Ms. Swiatek said there are time constraints.

Mr. Carroll said there are no time constraints for Conservation.

Ms. Swiatek said that Ms. O'Malley told her there are two rounds of grants and Ansonia is a depressed City.

Mr. Carroll said Mr. Jaumann was helpful but Conservation needs to have a package especially since P&Z didn't have one. He said he wants to have the map and paperwork in front of him.

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He said to send a letter to P&Z and ask for a package. He apologized to Ms. Swiatek because she said she was getting the run around but this was brought up at 4 or 5 P&Z meetings. P&Z said we would get a package for this meeting.

Chairman Urban said that he was on Conservation when Mr. Casmir Machowski asked for the tax reduction for the open space. He said Mr. Machowski was concerned about the land and asked Inland Wetlands and Conservation for Section 4-90 conservation status. He said Conservation has received no paperwork on this request – none from the Board of Aldermen or anyone else. He asked Ms. Swiatek to make a copy for Conservation and to get the copy to each member. He said there is a history on this property. He asked that she send Conservation whatever she is sending to the other Boards. He asked Ms. Swiatek if she was asking Conservation for help.

Ms. Swiatek said yes, the family wants to know what is happening. She is the executor of the estate and she has sent a letter in February 2015 to Mayor Cassetti and Ms. O'Malley asking if Ansonia was interested in acquiring this land and keeping it as open space. She said they are paying taxes on it.

Mr. Carroll said Conservation will do what they can to expedite this proposal.

Chairman Urban said based on the information from Casmir Machowski all of his life the property was not developed – he wanted to leave it as open space. Everything says “leave it be”. He asked Ms. Swiatek to send Conservation a copy of everything she has on this.

Ms. Swiatek said she will send a copy of everything to the commission.

Tarek Raslan
Friends of Gatison Park
Ansonia, CT 06401

Mr. Raslan introduced Mya Wright and Renee Kitell also members of Friends of Gatison Park.

Mr. Carroll stated that he is also a member of the Friends of Gatison Park. He asked the membership if there was a conflict.

The membership agreed that there was no conflict.

Mr. Raslan said the Friends are a group of volunteers that came together to pick up trash and beautify the park. There are 10 or 11 members that come and they attend the meetings. The kids in the neighborhood join us when we are working in the park. We celebrate the space we have and it is a vehicle to bring the community together. He gave a brief report on the work that they have accomplished in the park.

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Mr. Raslan said he sent out invitations to the Ansonia Nature Center Director Allison Rublemann and she is exploring the concept of an outdoor classroom to study nature and educate the neighborhood on wildlife, butterfly houses, labeling trees, etc. He said he would like to see the group continue to grow. Ms. Rublemann is excited about the outdoor classroom and the classes focusing on nature. He said there is "heart" in the park and it is an interesting space for the neighborhood.

Mr. Cassetti asked what he expects from Conservation.

Mr. Raslan said Mr. Carroll invited them to the meeting to explain to the Commissioners what is happening at the Park and to look at this public park and how it overlays with the open space in the City.

Mr. Carroll said he invited them to attend a meeting as an introduction to their activities and as a line of communication. This is a great opportunity for Conservation as this group is very much involved in cleaning up the park. They are a dedicated group who work together as a community.

Mr. Raslan said they enhance the beauty of the park and area. This week they plan to plant 200 spring flower bulbs.

Chairman Urban congratulated them on getting together and helping each other.

Mr. Carroll explained the park stating there is 1.5 acres broken up behind the old community center. There is a children's park that was designated as the "Mikey Mills Park". He said he didn't know this group was meeting and he saw them painting the swings at the park. He met Mr. Raslan and became interested in helping. He said he was really impressed with this group. He said they have spent \$100's of dollars on improvements for the park.

Mr. Carroll said Mr. Raslan is working with Ms. Rublemann and they are very excited to have classes for the children. If they need our assistance we should back them, they are a very dedicated group.

Mr. Raslan said they are planning a Halloween Event at Gatison Park for the children.

Mr. Carroll said he enlisted the help of Judy Nicolari who was involved in the Cultural Commission to help Mr. Raslan with the hay and pumpkins, etc. He said he wanted to introduce Mr. Raslan and the group to Conservation Commission and have a working relationship with them.

Chairman Urban asked about ACA.

Mr. Carroll said there is a Day Care Center and an agency to help the veterans in that building.

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There was discussion on all of the work that has been done in the Park and on the activities that Mr. Raslan is planning. Mr. Raslan said that they would like to earn a little bit of money to help with the projects that are being planned. Mr. Carroll said the group wants to have signs made identifying the trees, plant flowers and bushes and they are working with Ms. Rublemann from the Nature Center on the plants. It is noted that there was a Police Officer in the park on Saturday shooting hoops with the kids in the neighborhood. This is a welcome event for the neighborhood and the kids. It was great to see this happen. The discussion continued on the past activities that have occurred in the park over the years and what has been done to stop this from happening in the future. There is a Police presence there every day.

Mr. Raslan thanked the commission for the opportunity to tell them what is happening and how they are improving the park and the open space. He said they could use some help from the Commission.

Mr. Carroll said he would like to see the Conservation Commission donate some funds to this group.

Chairman Urban asked if there was anyone else from the public who wished to address the commission. He asked three times. There was no one.

Mr. Joe Cassetti moved to close the public session at 8:05 p.m. . Mr. Carroll seconded. All in favor, so carried.

Minutes

Mr. Carroll made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 16, 2015 regular meeting as written. Mr. Pergola seconded. All in favor, so carried.

Bills

The following bills were presented:

1. CACIWC: Annual dues: \$75.00

Mr. Carroll made a motion to pay this invoice. Mr. Pergola seconded. All in favor, so carried.

Mr. Carroll said he would rather give donations to local groups that benefit the City of Ansonia instead of giving to other groups.

2. Ct. Land Conservation Council requesting a donation from the Conservation Commission.

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Chairman Urban said this is not a new group they have requested donations from the Commission in the past three or four years.

There was discussion on what the CT Land Conservation Council does with regard to land trusts, etc.

Mr. Cassetti moved to table this request for further information . Mr. Pergola seconded. All in favor, so carried.

3. Seymour Land Trust

Mr. Carroll moved to donate \$100 to the Seymour Land Trust in thanks for their oversight of the Conservation lands in the City of Ansonia. Mr. Cassetti seconded. All in favor, so carried.

4. Friends of Gatison Park

Mr. Joe Cassetti said they have to be recognized as a community group.

Mr. Cassetti asked if they have something they need.

Mr. Carrroll said they need money for signs to identify the trees and supplies for the nature classes that Ms. Rublemann, ANC Director will be using for the nature classes.

Mr. Joe Cassetti made a motion to recognize the Friends of Gatison Park as a community improvement group with meritorious efforts that are beneficial to improvement of the public park and they can approach this Commission for help in the future to continue their efforts for improvements. Mr. Pergola seconded. All in favor with one (1) abstention (R.Carroll abstained).

Mr. Joe Cassetti made a motion to appoint Randy Carroll as the Conservation Commission liaison to Friends of Gatison Park. Mr. Pergola seconded. All in favor with one (1) abstention (R.Carroll abstained).

Correspondence

None

Seymour Land Trust

Mr. Carroll reported on the Seymour Land Trust Meetings that he, Joe Cassetti and Frank Pergola attended. He said that the Seymour Land Trust had no copies of the deeds of the land

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they maintain for Ansonia and asked if Mr. Carroll could provide them with copies. He said the City of Ansonia had no record of the Beaver Street property however they did have Fountain Lake property information. Mr. Carroll said that he went to Hartford and got the deeds for this property and gave them to the Seymour Land Trust. He also gave copies to the Town Clerk for Ansonia's land records and a copy is in the Conservation Commission file in the Town Clerk's office.

Mr. Carroll said that Alex Danka, Seymour Land Trust told them about a grant to maintain the paths in the open space land. He said the City of Ansonia has no record that they received a copy of this grant. He said Mr. Danka will send Mr. Carroll a copy of the grant. He said he understands that the grant was to the Seymour Land Trust however he will give a copy to the City as a courtesy.

Chairman Urban asked Mr. Carroll if the Commission could reimburse him for his trip to Hartford to get copies of the deeds for the open space land.

Mr. Carroll said no, he does not want to be reimbursed. He is happy to do this for the City.

Mr. Carroll said there have been complaints that there is dumping into the open space and wetlands on Benz Street that is in the Seymour Land Trust. Mr. Pergola said he will contact the Seymour Land Trust and Mr. Carroll and Mr. Cassetti for a meeting on this problem.

Other business to come before the Commission

Chairman Urban said there are two renowned naturalists and conservationist that have passed Nobel Proctor and Roland Clement. He asked that the Commission pause for a moment of silence.

Mr. Carroll said that the Seymour Land Trust has accepted 50 acres of open space on Roosevelt Drive, Derby. They are looking into permission to use the parking lot that is located adjacent to the property.

Mr. Pergola said that Seymour Land Trust is doing a good job in taking care of our land. He said Ansonia members are active members on their Board and are helping them with their mission statement.

Mr. Pergola asked if the Conservation Commission could donate some money to the Seymour Land Trust and the Friends of Gatison Park tonight.

A discussion followed on what was needed by the Land Trust and the Friends of Gatison Park. The Friends are seeking funds for 5 litter grabbers at \$20 each for a total of \$100 or for 500 tulip and daffodil bulbs at \$50 or 10 tree signs at \$40. The commissioners decided that it was important to purchase the litter grabbers for the volunteers that will be picking up the litter and garbage at the park.

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Mr. Pergola made a motion to give the Friends of Gatison Park \$100 for the litter grabbers for the clean up of the park. Mr. Joe Cassetti seconded. All in favor with one (1) abstention (R.Carroll abstained).

Mr. Pergola rescinded his motion. Mr. Joe Cassetti seconded. All in favor with one (1) abstention (R.Carroll abstained).

Mr. Joe Cassetti discussed giving Mr. Carroll a note on Conservation Commission stationary requesting a donation from Home Depot for the community action. He said they usually donate to this type of activity.

Mr. Carroll said that Mr. Raslan has spoken to Home Depot and asked for pumpkins for the Halloween celebration and they are donating them.

Mr. Pergola made a motion to donate \$100 to the Friends of Gatison Park for their work in maintaining and improving the park. Mr. Joe Cassetti seconded. All in favor with one (1) abstention (R.Carroll abstained).

Executive Session

None

October Meeting

The October meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 20, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

Adjourn

Mr. Pergola made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m. Mr. Joe Cassetti seconded. All in favor, so carried.

Respectfully submitted,


Jo-Lynn Flaherty
Secretary