

**TOWN OF HADDAM  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARING AND MEETING  
TOWN HALL  
21 FIELD PARK DRIVE, HADDAM, CT  
THURSDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2019  
UNAPPROVED MINUTES  
*Subject to Approval by the Commission***

**ATTENDANCE**

X	Gina Block
X	Steven Bull, Vice Chairman
X	Michael Farina
X	Frank (Chip) Frey
X	Jamin Laurenza, Chairman
X	Wayne LePard
A	Edward Wallor, Secretary
X	Liz Bazazi, Alternate – Seated
A	Robert Braren, Alternate
A	Sam Todzia, Alternate
X	Bill Warner, AICP, Town Planner
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

**1. Call to Order**

Mr. Laurenza, chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

The pledge was recited.

**3. Attendance/Seating of the Alternates**

Attendance was taken and all regular members as well as alternate member, Ms. Bazazi, were seated.

**4. Additions/Corrections to the Agenda**

The Commission approved the agenda as submitted.

**5. Public Comments**

Terry Chriss, 43 Haddam View Heights, asked if it was the intent of the Commission to make a decision in regard to making a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) concerning a new site for the town garage. Mr. Laurenza stated the Commission would be discussing the matter and a determination would be made at that time. Mr. Chriss insisted the residents of Ruddy Ferry and Haddam View Heights have a chance to present environmental information regarding the Ruddy Ferry site during Public Comment in order for the Commission to have all the information pertaining to this site.

Mr. Laurenza asked the Commission if they would like to take public comment under Item 7d - Town Garage Referral. The Commission was agreeable. Mr. Laurenza explained that the residents would be allowed to speak after Mr. Warner, Town Planner, makes his presentation.

Emily Carrow, Dublin Hill Road, asked if that discussion would also include the Rossi property. Mr. Laurenza stated yes.

## **6. Public Hearings/Public Meeting - Special Permit: Accessory Dwelling, 7 Larkspur Lane**

Mr. Laurenza opened the public hearing at 7:03 p.m. As the applicant was not present, the public hearing was continued until Thursday, 3 October 2019.

Prior to the continuation of the hearing, Mark Lundgren stated he was in favor of the application.

**MOTION:** Jamin Laurenza motioned to continue the public hearing for a Special Permit for an accessory dwelling at 7 Larkspur Lane, Higganum, to Thursday, 3 October 2019, Town Hall, 21 Field Park Drive, Haddam, 7:00 p.m.

## **7. New Business**

### **a. CGS 8-24 Permanent Easement to Eversource – Ruth Hill Road**

Mr. Warner reported that Eversource has a temporary easement on town owned property surrounded by state forest that was granted by the BOS a while ago. Using a map (Exhibit A, copy on file in the Town Clerk's Office), Mr. Warner pointed out the parcel noting there is nothing around it only a dirt road along the power line. Eversource is going through the process of making all of their temporary easements permanent and are willing to pay the town \$5,000 for a permanent easement. Mr. Warner recommended approval noting this is consistent with the POCD.

**MOTION:** Jamin Laurenza motioned to issue an affirmative Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-24 report regarding CGS 8-24 Permanent easement to Eversource – Ruth Hill Road. Chip Frey second. Motion carried unanimously.

### **b. CGS 8-24 – Transfer of Nine Acres from Town to Haddam Land Trust as Permanent Open Space – Boulder Dell Road adjacent to Swan Hill Road Property**

Mr. Warner reported as of Tuesday, 09.24.2019, the town will own Haddam Elementary (HES) [10 acres] and the Haddam Land Trust (HLT) will own the Swan Hill property (145 acres). The nine acre Boulder Dell property (Shopboard Rock) was acquired through a deed in lieu of a tax foreclosure and is undevelopable and the HLT would like to add it to the Swan Hill property. Using a map (Exhibit B, copy on file in the Town Clerk's Office), Mr. Warner stated this is the first step in transferring public land, it will then go before the BOS, and then to a town meeting.

**MOTION:** Jamin Laurenza motioned to issue an affirmative Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-24 report regarding: Transfer of nine acres from town to Haddam Land Trust as permanent open space – Boulder Dell Road adjacent to Swan Hill Road property. Steve Bull second. Motion carried unanimously.

### **c. Discuss and Approve Administrative By-Laws**

Mr. Warner reviewed the proposed as amendments to the by-laws (Exhibit C, copy on file in the Town Clerk's Office) as discussed at the 08.15.2019 meeting. Items reviewed: **Article V – Membership** – Mr. Warner stated he had sent an email to the P&Z's attorney as to who can speak, etc. Alternates can speak during the hearing, but after the hearing, they should not participate unless they are seated. Ms. Bazazi stated what she has read is slightly different – a hearing is held and there's a period where the commission would discuss the matter as the commission would not go directly into deliberation. Ms. Bazazi also stated she can partake in any conversation that happens before a motion is made. Mr. Frey stated right. Mr. Warner stated under Roberts Rules, there should be a motion on the table before deliberations begin; therefore, once the motion is on the table, alternates should not speak. Ms. Bazazi agreed. Mr. Warner stated the vague area is 8-24s or commission initiated items as to whether alternates can speak and that he believes it's fine for alternates to participate. Mr. Warner noted that he add the following language to the last sentence – “any applicant initiated” and explained. This would mean if someone applies and comes before the Commission, should the Commission deny the application, the Commission could be

taken to court if an unseated alternate participated in the matter. Ms. Bazazi asked how it would relate to the Commission making a recommendation to the town for bonding, etc. Mr. Warner stated it's a gray area as it's the BOS making a request to the Commission to issue an 8-24. Ms. Bazazi stated there would be no applicant; therefore, it needs to be addressed and wants language added. Mr. Warner stated the BOS is supposed to send a letter requesting an 8-24 from the Commission. Ms. Bazazi asked if the section would be amended to include that wording as she likes everything to be clear as she wants to know when she can speak when she's not seated. Ms. Bazazi also stated she does not believe the town is an applicant and there needs to be wording indicating anyone beside the BOS. Mr. Warner explained that the town can be an applicant.

**Article VIII – Meetings** – Mr. Warner added the following to the first sentence: “the first and third Thursdays of each month, with the exception of August and the third Thursday in November, at 7:00 p.m. in the”. Mr. Warner stated there would not be a meeting before Thanksgiving and a number of towns shut down during the month of August. Mr. Warner also stated a special meeting can always be scheduled.

**Article XI – Public Hearings** – Mr. Warner reviewed the amendments and stated the language is not limiting people to five (5) minutes, but is asking them to wait until all others have had an opportunity to speak if they feel they need more than five (5) minutes to make their point.

**MOTION:** Chip Frey motion to approve the Administrative By-Laws. Wayne LePard second. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **d. CGS 8-24 – Town Garage Referral to BOS**

Mr. Warner reported the Commission has received his opinion letter (Exhibit D, copy on file in the Town Clerk's Office) and would not rehash that, however, other information has come up during the last two weeks. Mr. Warner advised the Commission that they are not acting as individuals or individual taxpayers or residents, but rather as the collective body of the Planning and Zoning Commission and their role is to implement the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).

Mr. Warner stated he believes the Rossi property is an appropriate location for the town garage as the POCD is very focused on Higganum Center revitalization. Mr. Warner stated the question is does the Commission want to start the process or delay it for a future (after the election) Commission. Mr. Warner reported that not everything will be completed before the next election and reviewed the process of what will need to be done in order to build a new town garage. If everything were to go smoothly with no obstacles at all a minimum of 17 meetings, four of which have taken place, would be required (Exhibit E, copy on file in the Town Clerk's Office) and the end result would be not seeing the finished product for at least three years. Mr. Warner stated everyone he's spoken to has indicated a new town garage is needed and noted that he spoke to 50 seniors on Monday, 09.16.2019, receiving no push back in terms of a new garage.

Mr. Warner also reviewed some financial consideration as the Commission wants to make a responsible recommendation (Exhibit E). Financial considerations include: Rutty Ferry Road – total project estimate - \$5.53 million (2017). Rossi – total project estimate - \$3.23 million (2017). As the Rossi property is an income property the following information was provided: \$90,000 a year gross rent, less \$36,000 from the town, equals \$54,000 gross rent. There is a new tenant going into the front brick building for an additional \$20,000. If the town were to purchase the property tomorrow the town would realize a savings of \$36,000 and gross rent of \$74,000. This could be very positive for the town and Mr. Warner would make an argument that the \$74,000 should go into a fund for Higganum Center Revitalization, which would be consistent with the POCD.

Mr. Laurenza asked the Commission if they would like to start with public comment and then discuss the matter or vice versa. Mr. LePard asked if the Rossi property is part of the Higganum Village District and how long has it been there. Mr. Warner stated yes, and that the property has been a part of the Village

since its creation. Mr. LePard asked if the Ruddy Ferry parcel is part of the Tylerville Village District and if ARC would have to review the proposal. Mr. Warner stated Ruddy Ferry is not within the Tylerville Village District; therefore, there would be no need for ARC to review the matter. Mr. LePard asked if Inland Wetlands (IW) would only pertain to the Rossi property. Mr. Warner stated the depression on the Ruddy Ferry (Arrigoni) property would probably be classified a wetlands and would need to go before the IW.

Pat Hartman, 51 Haddam View Heights, stated the neighborhood was before the Commission when the town identified the Arrigoni site as a possible location for the town's new Transfer Station and advocated against it. Ms. Hartman asked the Commission to not consider the Arrigoni site as the location for the new town garage. Ms. Hartman spoken in regard to three points: 1) Believes the sand pit to be a very fragile property – dug out possibly dangerous close to the water table, is quite porous, and sits next to and abuts Ruddy Ferry Creek and Spring and the Connecticut River. Any contamination that may occur could eventually contaminate the creek and the river and it would seem that the town would want to avoid any threat to those areas from salt, chemicals, etc. 2) Haven for animals - some that are threatened with extinction. Wells are close to the sand pit and birds, aquatic life, and vegetation inhabiting the neighborhood could be effect by contamination. Also, believes one of the houses has deeded rights to the Ruddy Ferry Spring. Ms. Hartman stated it would be short sighted of the town to purchase the least expensive property while losing significant tax revenue by decreasing property values of over 30 homes (believes property values could drop 15-20 percent). 3) Transfer Stations and garages do not belong in residential neighborhoods. Noted that the neighborhood lives with Eversource's substation. In conclusion, Ms. Hartman stated the area being considered is where they live; and asked the Commission to keep that in mind when making their decision.

Tim Teran, Landing Road, stated he believes the town just spent \$3.2 million, which is a lot of money, on the bond for the roads. Mr. Teran also stated we live in a beautiful town and it would be more beautiful if there wasn't a garage across the street from where it's currently located. Mr. Teran stated the Rossi property should be thought of more as a gem for the development of the town over time and that less than \$3.2 million could be spent to create a new town garage on existing town property. Mr. Teran also stated the grade behind Station 1 shouldn't be of concern because if the fire trucks can go down the driveway so can the snowplows. Mr. Teran stated this matter is worthy of a pause at this time.

Joe Rizzo, speaking on behalf of Katie Packtor who could not be present, read from his phone Ms. Packtor's comments. Ms. Packtor asked for a slight delay in order for the town to do its due diligence noting that P&Z cannot be prepared to make a decision. The reason for moving the town garage is the need for a new facility and additional space; however, there are four options and only two of those options (Ruddy Ferry and Rossi) were viewed during the site walks. East Coast Salvage and Station 1 have not been walked and these parcels should also have building and land appraisals as well as environmental documentation before a decision is made. The POCD has outlined the intention to move the town garage out of Higganum Center; therefore, with the Rossi property being within the Center, the recommended relocation does not follow the POCD. Ms. Packtor would like to see the planning workshops take place prior to a decision being made.

Mr. Rizzo talked about environmental impacts due to the streams leading into Higganum Cove and then into the Connecticut River and the Arrigoni parcel may not be a good option either due to similar facts. Mr. Rizzo stated the Commission needs to take a step back. Mr. Rizzo also stated the BOS that purchased the Station 1 property had the intention of building a town garage above the property; therefore, no matter the grade, it can be fixed for less money than buying the Rossi property.

Mark Jenkin, 10 Ruddy Ferry Road, spoke in regard to the environmental impact the town garage could have on the Ruddy Ferry site. Mr. Jenkin stated he walks the property all of the time and in doing so he has photographic documentation of three (3) different species of turtle currently laying eggs on the property – snapping, painted, Eastern Box (a species of special concern); mantis egg sacks on the meadow stalks; northern leopard frog (threatened species in CT); brown thrashers (bird species of special concern); and a hawk species (endangered). Mr. Jenkin stated since the area has been opened up, the installation of the pond, the planting of grass seeds, and no one working the property, more wildlife is

being attracted to the area. Mr. Jenkin also stated he believes it to be an improper move to place the garage on the site and displace the animals again.

Mr. Chriss asked if Mr. Jenkin could define what a species of special concern is. Mr. Jenkins stated it is on the verge of being threatened - don't see them that often, their eco-systems are being damaged, and habitats being taken away – and endangered - the species is on the verge of extinction.

Jay Verney, Landing Road, stated when he moved to town in 2005, he was surprised to see a town garage in the center of town and noted that surrounding towns do not have their garages in the centers of their towns. Mr. Verney also stated P&Z had an opportunity to protect the future noting that the existing town garage site used to be a park in the 1880s. Mr. Verney concluded by stating the Rossi site is not an obvious place to put a garage with the commerce, residential, and waterways surrounding it and recommended the Commission look at other sites.

Glenn Brielmann, 19 Haddam View Heights, submitted a 16 question questionnaire to the Commission (Exhibit F, copy on file in the Town Clerk's Office and emailed to all Commissioners). Mr. Brielmann reviewed the questions which included the following: the type of material/fluids that will be kept/stored at the garage, will road salt be in a storage shed and prevented from leaching into the ground (concerned over the porous nature of the sand pit and hazardous materials leaching into the groundwater; noted water table is low), how will town monitor/protect neighbors from noise levels (as Mr. Brielmann can hear dirt bikers and dump trucks, it's unclear why the parcel being 20-24 feet below the surrounding properties would be significant), and monitor/protect neighbors from lighting at night (Eversource substation lighting when left on at night is similar to daylight).

Mr. Chriss asked Mr. Warner to explain why the fire house property isn't being considered as it's his understanding that the property was originally purchased with the intent of putting the town garage to the back of the fire house. Mr. Chriss stated the parcel isn't in a residential area, runoff wouldn't be going directly into the river, and there are no environmental concerns. Mr. Chriss also stated he understands grading has been cited as an issue, but those same concerns were addressed during the siting of the fire house.

Mr. Warner stated the town engineer reviewed the site and prepared a grading plan, and the only usable site is several hundred feet above the fire house. Mr. Warner explained that during the presentations, the driveway was shown as a snaking road in order to meet the grades (can have no more than eight percent grade) all the way to the level site and that site is below a residential subdivision that would be looking down on it. The town engineer put a price of approximately \$800,000 for the driveway, which is cost prohibitive, and eliminated the advantage of using a town piece of property. Mr. Warner stated he's sure those neighbors would voice their concerns over the environmental impacts which would be very significant (clear cutting 15 to 20 acres of mature forest to reach the site). Although Public Works has to work on steep roads in snowplows, it just doesn't make sense to have \$150,000 trucks going up and down a snaking road all the time (just asking for a problem with icing and drainage). Mr. Warner noted that engineering didn't even look at storm drainage coming down the 1,700 foot driveway. Mr. Warner stated it would be a very challenging site.

Emily Carrow, Dublin Hill Road, stated that she has been driving past the blight of the town garage and the Rossi property since moving to town in 2007. Ms. Carrow stated she has worked for the past several years to encourage the revitalization of Higganum which includes some rational commercial development of the Rossi property and to move the town garage out of the Center according to the POCD. The proposal to put the town garage on the Rossi property is a step in the wrong direction and goes against the POCD and the efforts that have been done over the past two and one-half decades. Ms. Carrow voiced her opposition to having the town garage moved to the Rossi property.

Mr. Warner stated he's a downtown revitalization type of person and the whole idea is that if the town doesn't control the Rossi property, there will be no advances. There are six acres of a non-conforming

use which could look worse than it currently does and will continue to do so as the Rossis have no incentive to make any changes (currently bring in \$90,000 in rental income). Mr. Warner stated if the garage is put on the back half of the parcel, the buildings are cleaned up and moved away from the brooks, the front two acres are retained for future revitalization which the town can support with the community septic on HES, and then find a better use for the current town garage property. The thinking is to use the expenditure that the town needs to make for the town garage to stimulate development and cleanup of Higganum Center.

Mr. Rizzo stated although the town will save the rental money it's currently spending, it will lose the taxes that are being collected from Rossi. Mr. Rizzo stated Rossi has indicated that he wants to develop the property even though it's been difficult for him; and the BOS and P&Z need to help him move in the right direction - the logical process of development for the site. Mr. Rizzo believes with that assistance Rossi will move in the right direction. Mr. Rizzo doesn't believe it's logical for the town to own all of the valuable tax properties within the Center.

Mr. Teran stated if the town is trying to buy the Rossi property for the garage in order to protect the property in order for the town to develop it, he believes that to be two different issues. Mr. Teran asked what town do you know of that has a garage in the middle of it even though he understands the convenience. Mr. Teran questioned whether it could be done for \$1.5 million on existing town owned property; and if the town wants to buy the Rossi property for development, then the two need to be separated.

Mr. Verney spoke in regard to the financial analysis and the need to service the \$3 million bond and that the town shouldn't be in the business of buying up property, but rather encourage development. The P&Z should be setting a template for that. Septic has been holding back development and Rossi should be approached in regard to the septic fields with both parties working together.

In regard to the community septic system, Mr. Warner stated people need to be aware that per the State Health Dept. and DEEP regulations, the largest the town can get is a flow of 22,000 gallons per day and it's envisioned to serve much more than the Rossi property. Mr. Warner stated there isn't enough flow to develop the Rossi property at the scale they would like to develop. Mr. Warner also stated the Rossis have been very clear about wanting their 100 units of apartments.

Mr. Chriss stated there appears to be potential difficulties with the Rossi property and questioned whether there are any other locations that haven't been considered.

Mr. Warner stated he had used the geo-graphic information system to look through the town for potential sites, noting that his presentation outlined the process, and four sites were identified. 1) East Coast Auto Salvage – A salvage yard since the 1950s. Have talked to the owner and no environmental studies have been conducted. The site is still operated as an auto salvage yard. Mr. Warner stated he does not believe it to be wise to go in this direction in any way and believes there would be at least three years of environmental testing before even looking at the parcel. 2) The parcel above the fire house – The town's engineers evaluated the site as did Public Works. Due to the change in elevation and the surrounding neighborhood looking down on the site, it's not doable. 3) Rossi property. 4) Rutty Ferry Road.

Mr. Chriss asked what additional problems, other than the three year environmental study, are there on East Coast Salvage. Mr. Warner stated it could very well be significantly contaminated and that the town would not want to get into the chain of title for the parcel. A brief discussion followed in regard to the manner in which fluids would have been drained in the 1950s and whether this would have been an issue with Rossi as well. Mr. Warner stated Rossi has had extensive environmental investigation and have had approximately 2,500 tons of contaminated soil removed.

Ms. Carrow asked if there's evidence that the cleanup was done. Mr. Warner stated there's an environmental report from a licensed environmental professional that the material has been removed. This work

was done in 2015 when the wire company building was demolished. Ms. Carrow asked if that would be the site considered for the town garage. Mr. Warner stated the wire company was up towards the Saybrook Road intersection. The proposed town garage location would be in the existing buildings – the one the town currently rents and the green building in the back.

Mr. Briemann asked if there was any property off of Exit 7 that could be used. Mr. Warner stated most of Exit 7 is not in the Town of Haddam and it is all very significant rocky land. Mr. Verney asked if there was some town owned property there. Mr. Warner stated there is a lot of open space and Cockaponset State Forest.

Addressing Mr. Laurenza, Mr. Frey noted that Mr. Warner has business hours which some of these questions could be addressed during that time as the Commission has further business to attend to.

Ms. Bazazi stated she had spoken to Mark Lewis, Brownfields Coordinator, Water Protection and Land Use, DEEP, and for Brownfields sites DEEP offers programs (not funding) for liability relief for municipalities and private developers. There are also programs for abandoned Brownfields - cleanup program and remediation/revitalization program that grant towns or private developers exemption from liability and also provide defense from a third party liability if chemicals leach into a neighbor's property. There is also a municipality liability relief program – used if a town is foreclosing, owning for a short time, and flipping the property. Ms. Bazazi stated she believes through the Department of Economic Community Development (DECD) there are also funds for assessments. Ms. Bazazi made it clear she was not an expert in this area.

Ms. Bazazi stated she spoke to another DEEP employee who is more involved with environmental issues and had indicated that he thought the town would want to take over ownership of a site such as East Coast Salvage as there's a probability of contamination. Ms. Bazazi also stated she's aware they are on bottled water at this time. Ms. Bazazi stated the DEEP employee explained to her that there are two classifications for Brownfields remediation (residential or commercial/industrial) and that residential cleanup is very expensive and with commercial/industrial cleanup there are other options that are less expensive and a Phase 1 and 2 assessment would need to be conducted. Again Ms. Bazazi made it clear she is not an expert.

Ms. Bazazi distributed and read into the record a letter (Exhibit G, copy on file in the Town Clerk's Office). While the letter was being distributed, Mr. Warner clarified that if there is a responsible party, the town is not eligible for a Brownfields grant and cited his past experience in obtaining such grants.

In her letter, Ms. Bazazi acknowledges that research has been conducted on four sites for the relocation of the town garage, but disagrees with Mr. Warner's recommendation. Citations in the letter include Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) 8-23 and 8-3a (Ms. Bazazi stated this is not enforceable as it is not a law.); the Haddam POCD – pages 12, 15, 16, 85, and 86; and the Haddam Zoning Regulations – page 7A-6 (Ms. Bazazi noted that Rossi and Public Works are non-conforming uses within the Village District). Ms. Bazazi spoke in regard to a pedestrian plan to connect the Reservoir to Higganum Cove and people having to view the chain link fence with the barbed wire on top (essential to prevent thief). Ms. Bazazi also spoke in regard to the creation of an industrial park noting that she did her own research of 25 towns and not one had their town garage in their centers, but are typically co-located with a transfer station and/or industrial sites.

Ms. Bazazi stated East Coast Salvage is 35 acres with parts of it being wetlands, contaminated, a sand pit, and steep and wooded; however, questioned whether there is still potential to put in the garage, solar farm, and/or contractors' yard. In conclusion, Ms. Bazazi stated the POCD has no standing, but the regulations do and that a zoning change would have to occur in order for the garage to move to Rossi. Ms. Bazazi asked the Commission to consider viable sites that will not make them vulnerable to lawsuits and that are large enough to accommodate other current and future needs – industry and energy.

Mr. Warner stated that the town's Village District zone does specifically allow change of use for a non-conforming use to another non-conforming use by Special Permit and clearly this was written for the Rossi property in the hopes that something could happen. Ms. Bazazi stated it clearly excludes Public Works. Mr. Warner stated a Special Permit change of use for a non-conforming use is allowable. Ms. Bazazi stated that will need to be investigated.

Mr. Laurenza asked how the Commission would like to proceed. Mr. Bull recommended that the charrettes/workshops be conducted prior to the Commission committing to having a town garage in the Center.

Mr. LePard asked if within the next year an ideal site (WFS) were to come up, would the Commission be willing to wait a year. Mr. Frey and Mr. Bull stated it wouldn't be appropriate. A brief discussion followed in regard to the number of trucks that come out of WFS. Mr. Warner stated the WFS site was not looked at because it didn't have access to a main road.

Mrs. Block stated she's not satisfied with the reasoning behind why East Coast Salvage and the parcel behind the fire house were eliminated from the list; and asked for the current grade of the driveway v. the perspective grade to reach the top of the property. In the end, a decision has to be made as to what will benefit the town to the greatest degree. Mrs. Block stated she would like additional information regarding these two parcels and will probably have additional questions.

Mrs. Block stated if the process will take three years, why not wait one month to solicit feedback from the public regarding a site selection as there may be additional sites the Commission hasn't considered. Mrs. Block stated within the document Mr. Warner distributed (Exhibit E), due diligence is mentioned numerous times and the definition is somewhat cloudy (what it entails or what is meant by it) as she believes all of those points should come before the recommendation to the BOS. Mrs. Block stated she is having difficulty processing the information never mind making a recommendation as she feels ill-informed and if the Commission is going to make this decision on behalf of the town, then the public needs to be a part of the discussion.

Mr. Frey stated he believes all of the facts need to be presented and that the POCD is a guideline, it is not the Constitution, and even the Constitution has amendments to it. Mr. Frey noted that when the POCD was written, there was a school in the Center; however, things have changed as the school has closed. Mr. Frey stated even though the school closed, the Village Market didn't close and other food establishment has opened. Mr. Frey also stated a lot of opinion has been provided noting that Mr. Rossi could put in Section 8 housing and there would be nothing the town could do to prevent it. Mr. Frey stated the town could have had a possible \$250,000 in tax revenue from the reuse of the school from the developer's proposal (a potential \$6 million). Mr. Frey stated more facts are required rather than opinion. Mr. Frey also stated he's afraid of the salvage yard as it's unclear what lies beneath it. At least with the Rossi property, the town has some control over it and can possibly bring some people in. Mr. Frey stated if the town's engineer doesn't recommend the fire house parcel, why would the Commission.

Mr. Bull stated he would like additional information regarding the potential sites as well as the industrial property where GCI is located.

Mr. Laurenza stated he heard the public speak about sand and salt and it being near a stream; and noted that East Coast Auto Salvage is divided by a stream. Mr. Laurenza talked about his past experiences with the site and walking through fluids that were on the ground. Mr. Laurenza stated he doesn't believe those materials have disappeared.

Ms. Bazazi stated she shares Mr. Laurenza's concerns about the contamination, but when speaking to the DEEP officials, they didn't want her to assume that the neighbors' wells weren't contaminated and why wouldn't the town not want to take care of this site. Ms. Bazazi stated at Mr. Laurenza's recommendation to walk the site, she did and the owner showed her the entire site. Ms. Bazazi believes the town



should be concerned about this site, that remediating a Brownfields site is a good thing, and that the Commission owes it to the town to do something with this site.

Mr. Warner stated it's about being responsible with taxpayers' money and explained the environmental analysis – Phase 1, 2, and 3. Ms. Bazazi stated the reason why she called was to see if there was funding and believes it's worth looking into. Mr. Laurenza stated Mr. Warner needs to be given his due; and asked him how many contaminated sites he had to deal with while working in Middletown. Mr. Warner stated probably 30 – some sites that did not have responsible parties were cleaned up, but government funding cannot be obtained when a private sector party is responsible.

Mr. Warner stated he doesn't have a problem waiting for a recommendation until the workshops are completed; but did voice some concern about the potential for the process to drag out until late spring due to the holidays, the winter, and a new administration. Mr. Warner stated he feels if a recommendation is made prior to the election, it would be good noting the energy generated by a new election, public discussions, etc.

Mr. Laurenza asked how the town would be protected should it decide to go with the Rossi property and something else were uncovered (not found originally). Mr. Warner stated the town would end up in court with the environmental firm and the insurance companies.

Mrs. Block asked what is driving the workshop dates. Mr. Warner stated his goal is to hold the workshops on 10.30.2019 and 11.02.2019. Mr. Warner noted that the RFQ is out with a due date of 10.01.2019, interviews need to be conducted, a selection made, a contract negotiated and approved by the State Historic Preservation Office (the ones providing the funding), and then the consulting team would work with them to get the workshops going. Mr. Warner would like to conduct the workshops in the All Purpose Room, HES. Mr. Frey asked if it wouldn't make sense to hold off the workshops until after the election as there will be a number of new faces on numerous boards. Mr. Warner stated he doesn't want to lose the momentum/energy.

**MOTION:** Jamin Laurenza motioned to table further discussion on the town garage referral to the BOS until after charrettes/workshops have been conducted. Steve Bull second. Motion carried unanimously.

## **8. Approval/Correction of the Minutes**

**MOTION:** Jamin Laurenza motioned to approve the 24 August 2019 Special Meeting minutes as submitted. Chip Frey second. Motion carried unanimously.

Correction to the 15 August 2019 minutes, page 2, Public Comments, second paragraph, tenth line – change “Mr. Frey passed a heated comment at Ms. Schlag and” to “While Mr. Frey still had the floor, Ms. Schlag repeatedly interrupted him, prompting him to raise his voice and pass a heated comment at Ms. Schlag.” Begin new sentence at “Mr. Laurenza stopped . . . “

**MOTION:** Jamin Laurenza motioned to approve the 15 August 2019 Public Meeting minutes as amended. Gina Block second. Motion carried unanimously.

## **9. Chairman's Report**

There was nothing new to report at this time.

## **10. Scheduling of Hearings**

**Special Permit:** Accessory Dwelling, 7 Larkspur Lane – Hearing continued to Thursday, 3 October 2019.

**Special Permit:** Attached Accessory Apartment and One Lot Subdivision, corner of Park Road and park Road Extension, Thursday, 3 October 2019.

## 11. Town Planner's Report

**Projects in Progress Report** - Mr. Warner distributed and reviewed his report (Exhibit H, on file in the Town Clerk's Office) with the Commission. The following items were noted: – Scovil Mills (meeting on Wednesday, 09.25.2019, with the State in regard to the \$200,000 the town should be receiving); the Jail (talking to restaurants and trying to figure out a way to get the jail occupied while preserving the structure from an historic preservation point of view); the Bridge Road sidewalks (30 percent design phase, conducting public workshop soon); Haddam Center sidewalks (survey/design in progress, work can include street lighting, landscaping, signage, and street furniture. Believes something unique can be created by tying in numerous structures/features along the sidewalk. Hope to have a workshop in 2020.)

Mr. Warner also reviewed a listing of residents who have been granted permits from July 1 to August 31 – 34 permits, collected \$21,000 in permit fees, and \$1.04 million in improvements for mostly residential properties. Noted that last year it was \$6 million for the year.

**Sidewalks – Higganum Center** - Ms. Bazazi stated it's difficult to back out onto Route 154 when leaving the Fork in the Road (new food establishment) and that the original funding and plan for the streetscape was to have sidewalks in front of the property (previous owner did not want the sidewalks). Ms. Bazazi stated after talking to the current owner, she would like sidewalks.

### Planning Workshop

Previously discussed.

**Haddam and Higganum Congregational Churches** - Mr. Bull stated the First Congregational Church of Haddam and Higganum Congregational Church have been in the process of merging for the past three or four years. One of the possibilities is one of the churches will be empty and Mr. Warner has offered to come and talk to the congregations as to what might go into one of the structures. Mr. Bull stated Haddam Congregational consists of the sanctuary and two buildings to the south of it and Higganum Congregational consists of the sanctuary and the parsonage to the north of it. Mr. Bull also stated the Town Office Building leases property from the church. Mr. Frey asked if the Haddam church had burned down some time ago. Mr. Bull stated yes, and although the building isn't historic the site is. Mr. Warner stated the real jewel in Haddam is Haddam Center due to the historic buildings and the National Historic District.

## 12. Adjournment

**MOTION:** Chip Frey motioned to adjourn. Steve Bull second. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Bunny Hall Batzner*

Bunny Hall Batzner  
Recording Clerk

**The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 3 October 2019.**