

**TOWN OF HADDAM
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
TOWN HALL
21 FIELD PARK DRIVE, HADDAM, CT 06438
THURSDAY, 18 JANUARY 2024
APPROVED MINUTES
*Approved as Submitted at the 1 February 2024 Meeting***

ATTENDANCE

X	Gina Block
X	Scott Brookes, Chairman
X	Michael Farina, Secretary
X	Mike Karam
A	Wayne LePard
A	Tim Teran
X	Edward Wallor, Vice Chairman
A	Alan Chadwick, Alternate
X	Dorothy Gillespie, Alternate – Seated
X	Larry Maggi, Alternate – Seated
X	Bob McGarry, First Selectman, <i>Ex Officio</i>
X	Bill Warner, AICP, Town Planner
X	Leon Mularski, Zoning Enforcement Officer
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

1. Chairman Calls Meeting to Order

Mr. Brookes, 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 members, Mrs. Gillespie and Mr. Maggi, were seated.

4. Additions/Corrections to the Agenda

The agenda stood as submitted.

5. Public Comments

There were no comments for those in attendance.

6. Public Hearing / Public Meeting

There were no public hearings scheduled.

7. Approval/Correction of the Minutes

Correction to the 21 December 2023 minutes: page 4, Presentation on Affordable Housing, third paragraph, end of second line – change “affordable” to “affluent”.

MOTION: Mike Farina motioned to approve the 21 December 2023 minutes as amended. Dorothy Gillespie second. Motion carried with Ed Wallor abstaining.

MOTION: Mike Karam motioned to approve the 7 December 2023 minutes as submitted. Gina Block second. Motion carried with Ed Wallor abstaining.

8. New Business – Connecticut General Statute (CGS) 8-24 Report Regarding:

Mr. Warner explained the relevance of an 8-24 Report and the process.

Mr. Warner reported the presentation will be made at several different meetings noting that the 16 January 2024 meeting was cancelled due to weather. The public hearing is scheduled on 25 January 2024 and town meeting on 8 February 2024 for the vote barring a petition for referendum.

Mr. Warner stated the presentation has been pared down due to the limited scope of what is being looked at. Under the POCD, the town is acting under Chapter 126 (municipal planning) and not Chapter 124 (zoning). Mr. Warner stated tonight the Commission will be acting as a planning commission.

Mr. Warner stated the Commission reviews projects under Section 8-24. Mr. Warner reviewed the language and noted that Bob McGarry, First Selectman, who was in attendance, was representing the town as the applicant.

a) Construction of New Playscape at HES

Mr. Warner stated the town received a state grant and hired Fitzgerald and Halliday to design a multi-generational play space. They started working on a master plan on the property similar to one done for Higganum Cove (identified improvements that needed to be done and over time program money into the Capital Budget to build these projects). Play space master plan is still in draft form.

Mr. Warner stated Fitzgerald and Halliday were also hired to look at improvements where the former playground was located. A number of people have mentioned how they miss the playground and parents of young children have been very involved through Facebook as to what type of improvements should be made. The plan will be presented in detail at the public hearing 23 January 2024.

Mr. Warner acknowledged that when the POCD was written, HES was not owned by the town but by RSD17; however, now that the town owns it the town should be maintaining their passive recreation facilities in a sufficient upgraded manner; therefore, the proposal would be consistent with the POCD.

Mark Hollman stated it appears as if the leeching field will be taking over a large portion of the HES property and the playground appears to be pushed toward the back. Mr. Hollman stated it has been his experience that you cannot build on top of a leeching field. Mr. Warner stated construction can take place on top of a leeching field. Using the map, Mr. Warner pointed out the existing basketball courts and their potential relocation area and noted that the playground will be going to the other side of the property.

MOTION: Ed Wallor motioned to approve a CGS 8-24 Report regarding the construction of a new playscape at HES. **Comments:** None. Scott Brookes second. Motion carried unanimously.

b) Development of Community Septic at HES

Mr. Warner stated a grant from the State of Connecticut was received and used to study the issue (hired Jacobson & Associates; Brian Curtis, P.E., an expert who worked for DEEP for 30 years on community septic systems). Using an aerial map of the HES and Rossi properties, Mr. Warner showed the areas looked at for community septic sites. Mr. Warner stated a preliminary design has been designed and grant funding has to be used by 30 April 2024. Mr. Warner also stated the leeching fields on HES show 16,000 gallons a day which is more than adequate to get begin designing a conveyance system.

Mr. Warner concluded this portion by asking if the development of a central sewage disposal system in Higganum Center was consistent with the POCD. Mr. Warner stated he believes this project is consistent with the POCD.

MOTION: Ed Wallor motioned to approve a CGS 8-24 Report regarding the development of the community septic at HES. **Conditions:** None. Gina Block second. Motion carried unanimously.

c) Sale of the Rossi Property for Redevelopment

Mr. Warner reported that the Commission issued an affirmative 8-24 Report regarding the purchase to facilitate redevelopment of the Rossi property on 20 October 2022. Mr. Warner reviewed his comments – “acquiring the Rossi property and redeveloping it with the goal of revitalizing Higganum Center is completely consistent with the POCD” - as well as concerns of several P&Z commissioners from the minutes of that meeting. Commissioners Block and Bull raised concerns of the property being tied to Public Works (purchasing the site for constructing new Public Works facility) and Commissioner Laurenza was concerned about retaining existing businesses located on the site. Mr. Warner stated the town is proposing to relocate Public Works and will be protecting the existing tenants on the property. Mr. Warner reported the following: 1) Residents voted at a town meeting to acquire the property to facilitate redevelopment. 2) The town secured \$1.5 million grant for environmental remediation. 3) Town advertised statewide for developers and only one developer, Higganum Village LLC, responded.

The developer has been working for at least four months on conceptual plans and what the market can support given the septic and groundwater issues. Mr. Warner noted the conceptual plans will change a number of times as they go through the permitting process - DEEP for remediation, DPH for community well and septic, DOT for encroachment and traffic issues, Inland Wetlands, Architectural Review Committee (ARC), and P&Z to review the actual plans.

Mr. Warner stated this process (8-24) is merely allowing the first selectman to enter into a purchase and sales agreement to allow the developer to start spending his money to design the project and to get the \$1.5 million grant to begin the cleanup.

Mr. Warner stated this project is difficult due to a number of complications (all were presented when the town purchased the parcel). In terms of the area, there is a very low traffic count (not beneficial to national retailers or strip development); population density is low – almost 5,000 people v. Chester almost 8,000, Deep River 10,000, and Essex 9,500 (no national retailers or strip development); and helps to retain small town character, but is challenging to a developer. Site issues include: \$1.5 million in contamination, almost 100 percent of the area is under 12 feet of industrial fill; the groundwater at six to eight feet; and a long term (99 years) lease on 305 Saybrook Road, former JC Products wire factory (Transfer Act Property). Mr. Warner stated the town can do whatever they want on the site; however, because the town does not own it, it does cause complications with financing because there is contamination. There are four existing tenants on the property (three have leases) and they have to be kept on the property. Mr. Warner stated the Public Works operations have spread as the town does more and more road work. Using an aerial map, Mr. Warner pointed out Public Works location on the site – garage area (agreed to lease in 2014) and material piles throughout the property (creates issues in terms of development).

Mr. Warner reported the developer would like to do residential (multi-family) as it is the only strong market at this time. Mr. Warner pointed out the areas where this would work (property cleaner, but needs to be cleaned to a residential standard). Property is only cleaned to a commercial/industrial standard at this time. Difference needs to be picked up by the developer.

Community water system is required when there is a building serving more than twenty people. Three buildings will require a community water system which will also require the DPH, an operator, and someone to test the water.

Mr. Warner stated the soils are not suitable for a septic system because of the groundwater and the conditions of the soils. Mr. Warner stated they looked in another area to create another septic system.

Mr. Warner reported the developer has come up with the Higganum Village Concept Plan – mixed use allowed by special permit and the developer would need to come back to P&Z with full detailed plans. The concept that the developer would like to pursue: 43 residential units and because its state funded will need to have eight affordable units (80 percent median income – approximately \$71,500; \$1,800 per month) and the rest would be market rate. 40,000 square feet of flex commercial, including three existing tenants. Developer would need to build buildings and come up with agreements with existing tenants to move them into the new structures and tear down the old buildings before doing anything else. Existing office building to the front would be preserved and converted to a restaurant with a large outdoor space at a highly visible corner. All subject to ARC and P&Z review and approval. Mr. Warner stated all of this will take a long time, a long project. The review is just authorizing the developer to get started. The financial agreement that the town has with the state is five years long.

Mr. Warner reviewed concept plans – heavier industrial/commercial uses will be kept towards the back of the property (stream side) with a strong wall to shield it from the remaining property; residential to the front and side along HES property; restaurant along Route 154; and flex commercial (such as yoga studio, electricians, home businesses that have outgrown the home) along Depot Road. Public Works would be kept on the property in a 12,000 square foot building. Discussed integrating the Rossi and HES properties – single story units with lofts looking out onto the HES property, playgrounds and fields.

Mr. Warner noted that the POCD is quiet about the Rossi property, but there is a section within the POCD about redevelopment opportunities in Higganum Center. Also addresses people having difficulty finding affordable market rate homes within walking distance to the centers. Mr. Warner stated that any project facilitating the redevelopment of the Rossi property would be subject to the Commission's approval and is consistent with the POCD.

Mr. Warner stated there have been comments about his leave of absence; however, if you look at the timing (reviewed) for approval of financials, closing on the DEDC funds, when remediation can begin (late spring 2025), it will all take a great deal of time.

Sandra McCurdy asked Mr. Warner why he did not mentioned the storage units again and why is it being glossed over. Mr. Warner stated he's trying not to talk about specifics as it will have to go through a long process to get permits. Mr. Warner stated the property is located within the Higganum Village District Zone and it does not allow self-storage. Mr. Warner stated the developer has indicated this is what he thinks could work there, but he would need a zone change to do self-storage. Mrs. McCurdy stated she believes it's important for people to understand what is involved in this proposal. Mr. Warner stated the proposal will change and evolve a lot.

Gordon McCurdy stated the core competency of this developer is building self-storage units, that is his business. Mr. McCurdy asked why items are being proposed if they may not happen. Mr. Warner stated he's aware the developer has built other things beside self-storage units. Mr. McCurdy asked if he'd built residential units. Mr. Warner stated he didn't know, but that the developer could answer the question at the meeting next week. Mr. McCurdy asked why Mr. Warner is making the presentation and not the developer. Mr. Warner stated the presentation is for an 8-24 Review – the town asking the Commission to sell the property to a developer. It is not the developer saying this is what he wants to have happen. Mr. McCurdy stated yes it is a request for P&Z to approve the sale of the property; however, how can the P&Z approve what they do not know is being proposed. Mr. Warner stated the POCD simply says the property should be redeveloped.

Liz Bazazi stated it's her understanding that Mr. Warner is telling the Commission that they are not to consider the plan, but are only to consider selling the property; and asked what state statute that was being based on. Mr. Warner stated 8-24. Ms. Bazazi stated she read that and asked Mr. Warner to tell her what part of 8-24 outlines that. Mr. Warner returned to the slide outlining the 8-24 wording and

reviewed it again. Ms. Bazazi asked where in the statute it says the Commission should not consider the proposal. Mr. Warner stated it would be inappropriate for the Commission to consider a proposal outside of a public hearing and that Ms. Bazazi should understand that as a former P&Z commissioner and the Commission cannot have ex parte communications outside of a public hearing. Ms. Bazazi stated she spoke to a land use attorney and a planner and both said that the statute does not say what Mr. Warner has indicated and it is not the law. Discussion followed.

Mr. Hollman asked Mr. Warner if the plan as currently drawn would go into the development agreement as an exhibit binding the town. Mr. Warner stated no. Mr. Hollman stated the plan looks like an office park with a storage center in the middle. The housing looks like storage units and are not separated from the industrial. Mr. Warner stated he understands and that those comments are appropriate for the meeting next week not for the 8-24 Review. Mr. Hollman asked how P&Z could say no to this when asking for compliance with a comprehensive plan. Mr. Warner stated that's why the plan goes through the permitting process.

Mr. Karam stated the POCD talks about the village district which the Rossi property is in; therefore, the POCD may not mention the Rossi property specifically, but it mentions the village district in depth (village district to act as a filter). Mr. Hollman stated when looking at the recommendations at the end of the document, it discusses only private ownership and not public. Mr. Hollman stated he believes the POCD is obsolete.

Jeff Sturgis, Old Ponsett Road, stated the town has been put in a position to get a sale agreement done to protect grant money and it seems like the developer is looking to purchase the property before obtaining any permits, reviews, and/or approvals and are assuming a large amount of risk that may not be approved. Mr. Warner stated the financial aspects are not pertinent to the Commission; however, the financial aspects are that the developer will not have a closing until he invests \$5 million into the property. Mr. Sturgis asked if nothing gets approved what happens. Mr. Warner stated the town would still own the property and have \$1.5 million to clean it up. Mr. Sturgis asked if the 8-24 would allow the town the time to secure the funding and time line to work with the developer. Mr. Warner stated correct; and if the property is not cleaned up, there will be no other developers interested in the property.

Sean McCann, 318 Walkley Hill, stated the town has \$1.5 million to clean up; and asked if a land use restriction can be placed on the property. Mr. Warner stated a land use restriction will be placed on the areas that will not be residential. Mr. McCann asked about drinking water. Mr. Warner stated there will be a community well, testing has been taking place, and there is an order against all of Higginum Center.

Mr. Hollman asked if there was an easement around the HES site. Mr. Warner stated no. Mr. Hollman stated one of the packages shows parking near HES. Mr. Warner stated one of the ideas is to tie the two parcels together and if agreed to, there would be an easement as well as for the septic.

Mr. Sturgis stated one of the reasons for purchasing Rossi was to eliminate some of the things that the town doesn't want to have happen (grandfathered uses). Mr. Warner stated non-conforming uses could not be removed when the property was privately owned, but when Rossi states they are giving up all of their non-conforming rights (clear intent to abandon); they will no longer be allowable. Mr. Sturgis asked if this is to simplify the infrastructure and will those rights would be factored into the conveyance. Mr. Warner stated yes, but clean corridors would need to be created.

Jack Calhoun, Jacoby Road, asked if the \$1.5 million grant was given to the town or the developer to supervise the cleanup. Mr. Warner stated the funding was given to the town to be responsible for the cleanup.

Erik Hesselberg asked if the DECD had a construction monitor. Mr. Warner stated DECD has a whole Brownfields staff and after Gov. Rowland, the State of Connecticut created an LEP program (licensed environmental professionals) to oversee these projects. Mr. Hesselberg clarified that the property has \$1.5 million of contamination and asked how the town determined this and what it mean. Mr. Warner

stated the Rossi's and the town had environmental firms testing the property, estimate cleanup costs varied between the two, and the town went with their environmental consultant's costs. Mr. Hesselberg asked if a TCE plume had been documented and could the plume migrate to other parts of the property. Mr. Warner stated levels of TCE showed up at 305 Saybrook Road and in 2014 Rossi had 2,000 tons of TCE contaminated soil removed. The town still came up with TCE hits and Rossi had to file a Notice of Environmental Hazard. Mr. Warner stated the state wasn't terribly concerned. Mr. Hesselberg asked how many cubic yards of material would be 2,000 tons; and noted that he didn't remember seeing the remediation project or the trucks.

Ms. Bazazi voiced concern that critical POCD action items have been neglected which should have provided a cohesive long-term plan and have left the town unprepared to use the Rossi site in a way that conforms to the POCD. Ms. Bazazi spoke in regard to Public Works being a light industrial use and that a site has been found to accommodate Public Works, but a parcel should be found to accommodate additional light industrial and local small contractors; linkage between 300 and 305 Saybrook Road and 103 Depot Road (comprehensive planning needed); and realigning Depot Road and have it function as a gateway to Higganum Cove. Ms. Bazazi continued to read from her notes talking about the apartments, water quality, and mixed use development. Mr. Warner stated the water system would be at the expense of the developer (his risk). Ms. Bazazi continued addressing concerns about open space, hiking, bicycling, etc., and the need for designating the riparian buffer along the brook as open space in order to protect it. Ms. Bazazi asked why there is no title name on the company block on the drawings (who prepared the drawings). Mr. Warner stated Pat Gorman, P.E. Ms. Bazazi asked why Mr. Warner was acting as the agent for the developer and if the plans belong to the developer. Mr. Warner stated the plans do belong to the developer and he's was acting as an agent to the first selectman (the town is requesting an 8-24 Review from the Commission).

Mr. Sturgis summarized for the difference of the purchase price v. the potential sales price Haddam would be getting a lot of simplified logistics, property for conveyance, \$1.5 million grant for cleanup of contamination and in return the developer is assuming all the risk for getting well water, architectural review, state permits. If all that fails, the developer's pockets are empty, but Haddam retains the \$1.5 million and it can then go back out for bid. Mr. Warner stated correct noting that the town will move as fast as it can to start the environmental cleanup and everything the developer submits will be public information.

Mr. Hesselberg asked if there was any scenario that the developer could get the property for \$250,000, couldn't do the things he wants to, and then would benefit from the rental income. Mr. Warner stated no, the draft purchase and sale agreement is very clear that there will be no transfer until the developer invests \$5 million. The town's attorney is drafting the agreement and the developer's attorney will review it. Mr. Hesselberg asked what is considered the developers investment. Mr. Warner stated that would have to be determined by the town's attorney in terms of how it is defined.

Raul DeBrigard stated he was a member of the committee when the POCD was put together and the document spoke of a number of items, but it did try to stay away from what can be done on any one individual's property. Mr. DeBrigard stated people seem to be fixating on details and that they're missing the fact that if we do not move forward it will not happen for another 20 years.

Joe Markim asked if the town will be entering into an agreement with this specific developer or the town will be just entering into an agreement. Mr. Warner stated in order for the town to secure the \$1.5 million, DECD needs a purchase and sale agreement with a developer (this developer).

Mr. McGarry, First Selectman, stated for clarification, the town meeting will be addressing the particulars of the purchase and sales agreement; and the determination of tonight's meeting is whether selling the parcel is in keeping with the POCD.

Prior to the vote, Mrs. Block stated she realizes that self-storage units are not allowed in the Village District, but asked if a condition could be added so the developer can see that the Commission is not interested in pursuing a zone change. Mr. Wallor stated the comments indicate self-storage is not

allowed. Mr. Warner stated it would not be appropriate for the Commission to make a decision outside of a public hearing. Mrs. Block felt the Commission could still make a professional recommendation.

Mrs. Block asked if there was anything the Commission could stipulate such as housing. Mr. Warner stated as long as it is an opinion.

Mr. Karam stated the question is whether a sale of Rossi is consistent with the POCD which it is; however, Mr. Karam was struggling with whether or not this particular sale was consistent with the POCD, and based on what he'd seen tonight, it was not. Mr. Warner stated the Commission is not being asked about a proposed use. The Commission is only being asked if the sale of the property is consistent with the POCD. Mr. Karam asked if the Commission could change regulations and believes the Commission should review their regulations.

MOTION: Ed Wallor motioned to approve a CGS 8-24 Report regarding the sale of the Rossi property for redevelopment. **Comments:** 1) Subject to ARC review and PZC special permit approval including public hearings. 2) Self-storage is not currently allowed in Higganum Village District Zone. Scott Brookes second. Motion carried unanimously.

d) Relocation of Town Garage Out of Higganum Center

Mr. Warner stated as they worked with the developer it became apparent that it would be extremely difficult to do a development. The developer has put in a building that would suit the needs of Public Works but not the outdoor storage of materials, etc. To get a development going Public Works would need to be relocated and Mr. McGarry and Mr. Warner jumped at the opportunity.

Mr. Warner stated the town garage was built in 1934 and it is very much out of date. An aerial of the site was shown. Mr. Warner stated the existing site is too small and Public Works has moved over to the Rossi property with most of their equipment being stored in the large building as well as the storage of pipe, material, etc. Mr. Warner noted that the POCD is clear about relocating the garage.

Mr. Warner stated since he became the town's planner he has been looking for a new location noting the challenges of topography, etc. Mr. Warner pointed out a parcel on Jail Hill Road (Lot 51-1) across from the Great Hill sports field. The parcel is 27 acres and is owned by the town with a deed restriction that it can only be used for municipal purposes. The parcel is located in an R2A residential zone and municipal buildings and uses are allowed by special permit. Mr. Warner stated what he will be showing are just concepts of what could work on the site and it would have to come back to P&Z. Mr. Warner stated he did speak to Chris Corsa, Public Works Assistant Director, and that he feels this site would work because it has access to all major road arteries.

Mr. Warner reviewed site characteristics: 27 acres but 7 acres of usable land. There is extremely steep sloping in most of the areas. Using an aerial, Mr. Warner pointed out the area. There are two areas that have better topography: a 4.5 acre piece and a 2.5 acre piece. There is a ridge running through the site. Pointed out by the town's engineer that drainage would be a challenge as there is no drainage in the roads.

The town engineer looked at the site preliminarily: a ridge cut (blasting), driveway coming up on to the site, and a significant cut coming into the 4.5 acre site. Does not use the 2.5 acre site. Lays out what Public Works would need. Mr. Warner stated subject to special permit approval by the Commission, the town would come in with their consultant and give a presentation.

Mr. Warner stated the POCD does not say where Public Works should go, but that it should be moved out of the center. Mr. Warner noted that approximately 30 years ago there was a committee looking for a new location for the garage of which Mr. Calhoun was a committee member. This proposal does seem to be consistent with the POCD.

Ms. Bazazi stated the town owns the property above the fire house and when the town voted on putting the fire house there residents were told the property had the capacity to have Public Works located there. Ms. Bazazi asked the slope on the Jail site v. the fire house site. Ms. Bazazi read from the POCD regarding industrial uses being located on major state roads. Mr. Warner stated there was discussion of Routes 9 & 81, but the Commission was not interested in rezoning the parcel(s) to industrial. Ms. Bazazi spoke in regard to the East Coast Salvage property and Rutty Ferry Road property. Mr. Warner stated the Commission was not interested in getting involved with the East Coast Salvage site, the Public Work's director and the town's engineer stated that an approximately 900 foot serpentine driveway behind the fire house would be too steep, and Rutty Ferry worked well but it has since been put under contract.

Greg Shields, Hayden Hill, stated that it had been mentioned earlier loud milling noises were associated with the existing garage site and asked if the same activity would take place on Jail Hill; and if so, it would appear as if the sound would carry over a large residential area. Mr. Warner stated he believes the site will work because there are limited houses within the area and are several hundred feet away. Unclear if they would do a milling operation again. The nice thing about Public Works is they're union employees, work from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and they do not work on weekends unless plowing snow. Mr. Shields stated he doesn't want to be wakened at 7:00 a.m. by a large milling operation. Mr. Warner stated it's a legitimate comment.

Mr. Hesselberg stated one of the best known recording studios in all of New England and one of the best in the country, Dirt Floor Recording Studios, is approximately 100 feet from where the garage is proposed. Mr. Warner asked the location of the studio; and upon Mr. Hesselberg telling him, Mr. Warner stated its 500 feet away and far above the site.

Mr. Sturgis stated although the developer wants the town garage off the Rossi site to make his development more viable, this concept for the garage is not necessarily tied to what happens to Rossi. Mr. Sturgis stated the selectmen can review this as a separate concept. Mr. Warner stated the developer has a plan showing a 12,000 square foot building for the town garage, but the existing garage and all its equipment cannot fit on its current site of 2.5 acres. It's a question as to whether the developer would continue to be interested if the town is not moving forward with the relocation of Public Works.

Mr. McGarry stated even if approved, Public Works will be staying on the Rossi site for a period of time and the developer is going to have to have one of the flex commercial buildings house Public Works until when or if Public Works out. Mr. Sturgis stated he understood noting that remediation needs to be done as well as infrastructure and a new site for Public Works. This would be years in the making.

Ms. Bazazi wanted to confirm that the Jail Hill site is the only viable site for Public Works. Mr. Warner stated although there are other sites with homes, etc., situated on them, this is the only site at this time. Ms. Bazazi asked if P&Z determines Jail Hill is not an appropriate site, would Public Works stay on the Rossi property. Ms. Bazazi asked how Public Works would remain on the Rossi site while the remediation was taking place. Mr. McGarry stated it would be a matter of sequencing. Mr. McGarry stated the developer will need to come up with a plan. Mr. Warner stated the existing buildings serve as a cap.

Ms. Bazazi reviewed the costs and spoke in regard to the town wanting to control the site in order to control the aesthetics of the site. Town investing \$2.25 million for an end result of development; however, if the industrial uses remain what is the net gain for the town. Mr. McGarry tried to explain that new buildings would make the site look better as well as the removal of the material (relocated to another town owned site). Mr. McGarry stated the town has some control. Mr. Warner noted the \$1.5 million to clean up the property. Mr. McGarry stated the appraised value will go up every year (additional taxes).

MOTION: Ed Wallor motioned to approve a CGS 8-24 Report regarding the relocation of the town garage out of Higganum Center. **Comments:** Subject to Special Permit from PZC, including public hearings. Mike Farina second. Motion carried unanimously.

Recording Clerk's Note: Copy of the presentation on file with the minutes in the Town Clerk's Office and Land Use Office.

9. Chairman's Report

Timber Harvest Petition - Mr. Brookes reported that the Commission was in receipt of a petition submitted by Erik Hesselberg pertaining to a tree cutting operation. Mr. Hesselberg stated he had not submitted a petition. Mr. Brookes apologized for the mistake. Mr. Brookes stated the Commission is aware of the matter, but it would be under the purview of the Wetlands Commission.

Illeanna Douglas stated she and Ron Matulevich submitted the petition pertaining to a clear cut permitted by the Wetlands Commission with possible subdivision (on original application). Ms. Douglas stated a contingency of the petition was to ask that it be put in front of P&Z. Ms. Douglas clarified that Erik Hesselberg did not go to the Town Office Building and submit the petition. Ms. Douglas urged anyone interested in the matter to attend a hearing scheduled for Monday, 29 January 2024. A brief discussion followed regarding the Wetlands Commission process.

Architectural Review Committee (ARC) - Vacancy – Mr. Brookes reported that he spoke to Mr. McGarry regarding new members and he felt the best way to do so would be to announce it to the public as there are at this time five or six people who have expressed interest. Mr. Brookes stated it would be best to post to the town websites. Mr. Brookes asked would the BOS make the choice or P&Z. Mr. McGarry stated typically for a vacancy, not a reappointment, is to advertise it, receive the resumes, P&Z review to make a recommendation to the BOS for appointment. A brief discussion followed.

11. Scheduling of Hearings

Clark House, Saybrook Road, Apartments – Special Permit – Public hearing potentially scheduled for Thursday, 1 February 2024. Date is dependent on timing of publishing the Legal Notice.

12. Town Planner's Report

Mr. Warner had nothing further to report.

13. Adjournment

MOTION: Ed Wallor motioned to adjourn. Dorothy Gillespie second. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bunny Hall Batzner
Bunny Hall Batzner
Recording Clerk

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 1 February 2024.