

**TOWN OF HADDAM
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING
TOWN HALL
21 FIELD PARK DRIVE, HADDAM, CT
THURSDAY, 18 JULY 2019
UNAPPROVED MINUTES
*Subject to Approval by the Commission***

ATTENDANCE

X	Gina Block
X	Steven Bull, Vice Chairman
X	Michael Farina
A	Frank (Chip) Frey
A	Jamin Laurenza, Chairman
X	Wayne LePard
X	Edward Wallor, Secretary
X	Liz Bazazi, Alternate (Arrived 7:27 p.m.)
X	Robert Braren, Alternate
X	Sam Todzia, Alternate
X	Bill Warner, Town Planner
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

1. Call to Order

Mr. Bull, vice 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.

4. Additions/Corrections to the Agenda

There were no additions/corrections to the agenda.

5. Public Comments

Prior to opening up the Public Comment portion of the meeting, Mr. Bull announced that Mr. Warner would be making two presentations and that no public input would be taken. The presentations will be posted on the town's website for the public's review and comments will be taken on 1 August 2019.

Mill Creek Landing Subdivision - Melissa Schlag stated that several residents have asked her what was taking place on the property across from Spencer's Shad Shack. Mr. Warner stated it's a previously approved three lot subdivision.

Rossi Property, 305 Saybrook Road – Ms. Schlag voiced concern over the property being potentially polluted with Trichloroethylene (TCE) as it is listed on the State's list of concerned properties.

Sewer Treatment and Laundromat – Ray Bogdan talked about the following: 1) East Haddam having a surplus capacity with their treatment plant and that they would be willing to share that surplus capacity with Haddam. 2) Recommended a treatment plant be considered down by the Cove near the river. 3) Requested the town consider a laundromat in Higganum Center.

6. Public Hearings/Public Meeting

There were no public hearings scheduled.

7. New Business

1. Higganum Special Area Study (Tabled Until August)

Tabled.

2. Results of Public Opinion Survey

Mr. Warner stated that Haddam Elementary School (HES) is a very significant project for the Town of Haddam and it's important that it be handled properly; therefore, a good way to start is by receiving public input. Mr. Warner also stated P&Z needs to be involved early in the process because ultimately whatever takes place at HES will come before P&Z.

Mr. Warner reported the survey was opened on 26 June 2019 and closed on 13 July 2019 with a 90 percent response rate in the first week (good response rate); posted on "You Live in Haddam If", "You Live in Higganum If", and "The Real Haddam"; advertised in the Haddam News; and posted on the town's website. Mr. Warner made it clear it was not a statistically valid survey and noted that as he watched the responses come in there was a lot of consistency.

Mr. Warner distributed copies of the results of the public opinion survey he had conducted (Exhibit A and B; copies on file with the minutes in the Town Clerk's Office) and reviewed with the Commission and public via a PowerPoint presentation. The survey results indicated the following: 1) Should the town sell HES immediately? The majority of respondents stated no. 2) Should the town lease HES to maintain long term control? Majority of respondents stated yes. Mr. Warner questioned what people want to control – playground/grounds, parking, gymnasium, soils for community septic, classrooms, and/or kitchen. Mr. Warner stated that with a lease future users would be hesitant to make any significant investments if they do not have an ownership interest in it. Mr. Warner noted this is similar to the Jail (can't sell) as he's spoken to three restaurant people in regard to opening a restaurant; but once they hear they can't own the building, there's no further interest even with a long term lease at \$1 a year. Mr. Warner stated HES needs a new roof (significant expenditure). Mr. Warner discussed whether a sale could be crafted that would retain public/limited public use of grounds, soils, playground, gymnasium, and/or kitchen. 3) Should the town sell/lease for less than market rate to offset the improvements needed on the building? The majority of respondents said no. Mr. Warner stated for any other use other than a school, the building will need to be brought up to current code; renovations range from \$165-\$225 per square foot; and building is 30,000 square feet plus lower level 9,000 square foot kitchen. An example used – conversion to apartments - 30,000 square feet at \$200 per square foot equals \$6 million. 4) Should the town retain HES property for a community septic system to avoid the need for/cost of a sewer system? The majority of respondents supported the idea of a community septic system. Mr. Warner addressed Mr. Bogdan's comments regarding East Haddam's sewer system (system designed for 50,000 gallons per day; last year an average of 13,000 gallons per day; 106 connections to the system). Mr. Warner stated as of today, there would only be 30-35 Higganum Center properties that would connect to a system. Mr. Warner reported that a 7,500 gallon system could be placed on the Higganum Green and 6,000 gallons are on HES (town's engineers have reviewed and it will work). 5) Should the town place a high priority on finding a new use at HES which will add activity to the Center? Respondents were in favor of this. 6) Should the town place a high priority on future uses which will patronize local businesses for goods/ser-

vices? Again favorable. 7) Should the town place a high priority on a future use at HES which will allow reasonable public use of existing outdoor recreational equipment and/or occasional public events in the gymnasium? Very high percent in favor. 8) Should the town dedicate the proceeds from the sale/lease of HES directly to improvements in Higganum Center? Very high percentage in favor of doing so. Mr. Warner stated a significant majority of respondents support the Center and its businesses; 80 percent support a use that brings activity to the Center on nights/weekends; 89 percent support a use that will benefit local businesses; 75 percent support a use that will preserve the playground and basketball courts for public use and occasional public use of the gymnasium; and 63 percent support dedicating the proceeds from the sale or lease of the building to improvements in the Center. 9) While there are many financial considerations, if all factors were equal, the most desirable future use of the HES building and grounds would be (multiple selections allowable)? – 57 percent public use (change of use would involve significant renovation costs; what would become of existing town buildings; entire property would be available for public use); 46 percent private school or training facility (could avoid change of use and need to bring building up to current code; reduces renovation costs; could result in higher purchase price; could maintain grounds, gym, and kitchen – possibly offer for public use as a commercial kitchen); 34 percent retail/office use (market very weak; medical – contact Middlesex Hospital; change of use – significant renovations and costs); 33 percent restaurant/conference facility (existing commercial kitchen a plus; too large for a restaurant – what to do with the rest of building; change of use – significant renovation cost), 25 percent elderly housing (Camoin Study indicates market exists; essentially affordable, would need public subsidy; with subsidy ADA and Federal Fair housing makes it very difficult to restrict to elderly), 24 percent market rate housing (Camoin Study indicates market exists and current rents cannot support renovation costs); and 16 percent affordable apartments (State funding option for affordable housing; low income tax credits available; and restricted to families at or below 80 percent of median income – Section 8). Mr. Warner briefly explained Section 8.

Next Steps - Mr. Warner stated the town would issue Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to see who may be interested, obtain as many proposals as possible, vet them, and continue the process.

Ms. Bazazi asked what Haddam's median income is. Mr. Warner stated almost \$80,000 for a family of four.

Mr. Bull asked when the RFQ will take place. Mr. Warner stated that would be a BOS issue and P&Z would see how it's being prepared.

Mrs. Block stated she felt a charrette should take place prior to issuing an RFQ in order to target a more appropriate audience. Mr. Warner stated he's getting more nervous about owning a school noting that there are numerous schools in the area that have closed. Mr. Warner also stated he doesn't believe the town needs to make a quick decision, but he would like to see who's interested and get proposals. Mr. Warner stated a public hearing could be held regarding the uses.

Mr. Farina asked if the engineering (inspection) reports have been received regarding the condition of the property and building. Mr. Warner stated most of information has been received – fuel, landscaping, etc. Ms. Bazazi asked for the annual maintenance costs. Mr. Warner stated as a school it was approximately \$90,000.

Mr. LePard asked if there is a life expectancy for the roof. Mr. Warner stated there are significant portions of the roof where their useful life is over (have a 2016 report). Mr. LePard asked the average cost of a roof. Mr. Warner stated the roof report estimates approximately \$350,000 for a whole new roof (noted there are currently a variety of roof types on the structure). Mr. Bull asked if the town has this as a budget item. Mr. Warner stated it needs to be considered and that the town needs to go before the BOF for funding for heating oil and maintenance (the building cannot look like it's abandoned).

Mr. Bull asked if the town is aware of what needs to be done once the closing takes place. Mr. Warner stated he has presented this information to the BOS. Ms. Bazazi asked when the closing will take place. Mr. Warner stated the closing will take place toward the end of September. Mr. Warner also stated that a

Mylar needs to be filed dividing the Swan Hill property off and deeding it to the Haddam Land Trust (HLT) and the school to the Town; and ideally the community septic needs to be separate as well.

Mr. Warner stated it was at his suggestion that public comment regarding the presentations be held off until the next meeting as there is a great deal of information to digest. It would also allow for the posting of the presentations in order for the public to review more fully rather than just react to what is being addressed.

3. Site Selection Presentation – New Town Garage

Mr. Warner stated that the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) has concluded that the town needs a new public works facility and it charges P&Z to find a new location. Mr. Warner reported he's been looking into the matter and talking to Chris Corsa, Assistant Director of Public Works, regarding the department's needs.

Mr. Warner distributed copies of the presentation (Exhibit C; copy on file with the minutes in the Town Clerk's Office, the Land Use Office, and on the town's website) and reviewed with the Commission and the public. The existing 4,900 square foot structure, built in 1934, is located at 103 Depot Road on a 1.5 acre lot bounded on two sides by Candlewood Hill Brook and a 100 year flood plain. The facility is of insufficient size to house equipment and conduct efficient and environmentally safe operations. Photos of the facility were shown. The town currently rents an unheated 10,000 square foot structure, built in 1950, from Rossi, for \$36,000 a year, for storage. The equipment within this building is currently valued at \$1 million. The structure is in poor condition; however, the steel frame is still solid. Photos of the leased building were shown. Mr. Warner stated the town garage is clearly inadequate to house a \$2.2 million operation, \$1 million in equipment, and 10 employees who are responsible for over 100 miles of roads.

Benefits of a New Facility - 1) Investment in a new facility will be a cost saving measure in the long term. 2) The town will no longer have to rent additional space. 3) The town's significant investment in equipment will be stored/maintained in better conditions thus extending life span. 4) The town can avoid future environmental and OSHA compliance issues. 5) The town can generate revenue from the existing facility when vacated. The facility is in a good location for makerspace, landscapers, or different types of contractors. 6) Best to act now and be proactive rather than wait for a problem – rental space no longer available, DEEP order, and/or environmental/OSHA issues.

Determined the Need for a New Garage – Reviewed the following: A 2017 Feasibility Study by BL Companies for Hebron, CT; Hebron Site Selection and Planning document by Jacobson & Associates (currently Haddam's town engineers); and input from Haddam's Assistant Director of Public Works and Jacobson & Associates to identify what the town needs and what it would cost. Mr. Warner stated Hebron and Haddam are similar in size except for two things (water/sewer and population per square mile) which makes Haddam not need as much as Hebron does. Square footage of indoor space, salt shed, and leased building were reviewed. Mr. Warner stated Mr. Corsa and Jacobson and Associates worked together as to what was needed for a new facility – garage/wash bay – 11,400 square feet, office – 3,600 square feet, storage building – 4,000 square feet, and existing salt shed – 4,000 square feet. Cost estimates based on the 2017 Hebron study would need to be increased for inflation.

Mr. LePard questioned the need for 3,600 square feet of office space. Mr. Warner stated its office and employee support - conference room, shower, bathroom (this is based on the Hebron Feasibility Study). Ms. Bazazi asked the current square footage. Mr. Warner stated 620 square feet. Mr. Braren stated the existing facility is woefully inadequate. Mr. Warner agreed.

Site Selection Process – Mr. Warner reported site search considerations include zoning, vast majority of the town is wooded, rural, and residential in character. A new facility cannot be out of character with its surroundings. Location of main roadways – Routes 154 (Saybrook Road), 81 (Killingworth Road), and 9 - as the site should have access to a main road. Mr. Wallor asked why Route 9 was considered as it's a state highway. Mr. Warner stated Public Works must use the highway to get to certain parts of town. Mr.

Corsa stated that Public Works does use Route 9. Due to the state forest and Haddam Neck, it makes it difficult to centralize the facility. Three to four level acres would be ideal.

Eliminated Sites - Sites previously considered – **733 Killingworth Road** (East Coast Salvage, existing business), **439 Saybrook Road** (Fire Station #1 property), and **HES** - were reviewed. In regard to the 733 Killingworth Road parcel, Ms. Bazazi asked Mr. Warner if there are other uses, such semi-industrial, he could foresee that the town could use the site for. Mr. Warner stated no, with the biggest deterrent being the potential for environmental issues; and that he would not recommend the town get involved with this site (liability issue). A brief discussion followed in regard to the Transfer Act. Mr. Bull asked how many of acres are unusable due to it being wet. Mr. Warner stated it's a lineal corridor (significant brook) with rugged land to the back. Discussion followed in regard to liability and whether the property is for sale.

Selected Sites - Rutty Ferry Road (Arrigoni Sand Pit) off of Route 154. Mr. Warner reported he has contacted the owner who is willing to sell (29 percent below assessed value). Access to the property was reviewed and an easement from Eversource would be needed to access Route 154. No grading. Most significant feature – site operations 20-24 feet below neighboring properties. Accommodates all operations with room to grow. Abutting uses to the property reviewed. Site is 24 acres, but only 10 acres viable. Site map reviewed. Mr. Bull asked what the property is zoned. Mr. Warner stated R-1 Residential and municipal uses are allowed in residential zones. Ms. Bazazi asked if Eversource would give the right-of-way. Mr. Warner stated he'd like to think they would as it wouldn't have any impact on them as the town would maintain the access way. Discussion followed in regard to the transmission lines being an eyesore and a public works facility being minor compared to that.

Mr. Bull asked if Haddam maintains Haddam Neck's roads. Mr. Corsa stated yes. Mr. Bull asked if there was a facility on that side of the river. Mr. Corsa stated the fairgrounds are kind enough to allow Public Works to store some equipment as well as sand and salt (open bin). Mr. Corsa noted that the area is remote and is plowed by a contractor. Mr. Corsa stated Public Works maintains the roads – repairs, drainage, etc., but during the winter months, a contractor is hired. Mr. Bull asked if contractors are hired for Haddam and Higganum as well. Mr. Corsa stated contractors are hired to do some parking lots and one or two gravel roads. Mr. Corsa noted that in the past, a number of contractors were hired to plow roads, but that changed when he was hired almost three years ago.

Estimated cost for a facility (using the 2017 Hebron Feasibility Study): Acquisition - \$325,000, Garage/Office/Support - 15,000 @ \$208/square foot - \$3,120,000, Storage – 4,000 @ \$87/square foot - \$348,000, Salt Storage: utilize existing, Site work based on Hebron site - \$1,400,000 – Total \$5,193,000 – Savings \$36,000/year Year 3 – Current Tax \$9,938.

In regard to the existing town garage, Mr. Farina asked if there were any surveys and/or remediation that are necessary that will run into the overall cost. Mr. Warner stated during an environmental study conducted in the early 2000s, there is an area of staining that was identified between the brook, the building fronting Saybrook Road (TechNet) and the facility.

300 Saybrook Road (Rossi property) – Mr. Warner stated this is out of the box thinking; however, he believes it could make a big difference in Higganum Center. Mr. Warner asked the public to focus on what's best for Haddam.

The site is just under five acres, with virtually no grading required, purchase price to be determined by appraisals and negotiation (have received a letter from the Rossis that they are interested in selling the property at a price of \$2.5 to \$3 million). Mr. Warner stated he's reviewed a 2015 letter from GeoQuest Engineers who removed 2,200 tons of contamination in the area of the wire factory and no further remediation required. Mr. Warner reviewed other attributes to the site – existing structures, other tenants which will help generate rental income, abuts HES, existing town garage, Higganum Center, and Bible Rock Brook and Swan Hill. Using a conceptual site map, Mr. Warner reviewed the location of the buildings (Jacobson & Associates will review for turning radius, etc.) and proposed fencing/significant buffer.

Mr. Bull asked if future expansion on the site is possible. Mr. Warner stated there's no reason why it couldn't happen and pointed to the back area of the site.

Mrs. Block asked if the salt storage building is existing. Mr. Warner stated the building currently exists on the town garage property. Mrs. Block asked if there are any issues with the proposed salt shed location given the proximity to Bible Rock Brook. Mr. Warner stated it's out of the flood plain and the wetlands; and when it's moved, a heavy membrane will be laid down.

Continuing with the presentation, Mr. Warner stated the town can use the remaining two acres on Saybrook Road to leverage public investment to facilitate revitalization in the Center noting there are two solid well maintained brick buildings on site and the property abuts the future community septic system. Mr. Warner also stated the purchase of the site would allow the town to control what happens on the largest parcel in Higganum Center, no longer will site development be subject to a \$10 million sewer system, and this parcel will be a game changer for the Center. Mr. Warner briefly talked about how he worked to revitalize downtown Middletown.

Mr. Warner reviewed how downtown revitalization would work – a slow and gradual process, step by step, small victories (very important), starts with unique and home grown. Step 1 - Attract interest and activity - Acquire the parcel, develop the Public Works garage, cleanup the front (create a lawn area). The lawn area could be used for concerts, flea markets, farmers' markets, food, beer & wine tasting, car shows, food truck festivals, and events that are uniquely Haddam. Step 2 – Once this area starts to become popular and people are there, they will look at the two existing buildings for potential uses. Mr. Warner believes the existing brick office building can be a restaurant (especially with the community septic) and the other brick building potentially makerspace. Step 3 – Proving the market for new investment which will generate more interest. No additional parking shown to make people use on street parking to create foot traffic for the other businesses. Mr. Warner showed a map with additional uses on the site.

Estimated cost for a facility (using the Hebron study): Acquisition (subject to appraisals, negotiation) - \$2.5 million – 3 acres for garage - \$1,630,000 – 2 acres for future development - \$870,000, Garage – utilize existing, reface/boiler - \$500,000, Storage – utilize existing – paint - \$50,000, Office/Support Space – 3,000 square feet @ \$150 square foot - \$450,000, Salt Storage – utilize existing, Site work/miscellaneous - \$500,000 – Total Cost Public Works Garage - \$3,130,000, Total Project Cost - \$4,000,000, Eliminating \$36,000 rent payment (\$700,000) - \$3,300,000. Lost tax \$20,708.

Mr. Warner noted that the costs for refacing and painting of the buildings are high as he currently received figures that are lower.

Mrs. Block asked if the \$3.3 million includes the cost of the site. Mr. Warner stated it does include the cost of the site.

Mr. Braren asked if the \$2.5 million is reasonable based on the current market or is it unclear at this time. Mr. Warner stated when you look at the income generated off of it, it's reasonable.

Summary – Mr. Warner reviewed the costs between Rutty Ferry Road – cost of new garage - \$5,193,000 less savings by eliminating rent - \$700,000 with a final cost of \$4,493,000 (Annual Tax Loss - \$9,939) - and 300 Saybrook Road – cost of new garage - \$3,130,000 – total project cost - \$4,000,000 less savings by eliminating rent - \$700,000 with a final cost of \$3,300,000 (Annual Tax Loss - \$20,780). Mr. Warner stated he felt the Saybrook Road site would allow the town to receive more bang for the buck for significantly less dollars.

Next Steps – Mr. Warner stated he will post the presentations to the town's website and would be interested in peoples' comments at the 1 August 2019 meeting; and from there the P&Z will make their recommendation to the BOS.

Mr. Bull asked when posted to the website, if there will be two sites presented and there will be no hierarchy between Rutty Ferry and Rossi. Mr. Warner stated the presentation will be posted exactly as presented. Mr. Bull also asked if the Rossi property is recommended, will it be a sustainable model for Haddam to own Rossi, HES, the old town garage, Higganum Green, and Scovil Hoe. Mr. Warner stated the town does not own Scovil Hoe (noted cost and remediation) and talked about the long and the short term objectives. Mr. Warner stated he believes revenue can be easily generated by renting out the existing town garage. Mr. Warner stated he believes it will work at the stage that Haddam is at and that it's not the goal for Haddam to own the most property in the Center.

Ms. Bazazi asked if there's a precedent for a town to buy up all the land and revitalize. Mr. Warner stated it doesn't have a good reputation, but that's the whole idea of redevelopment to put the property to a better use. Mr. Warner used Farmington and Middletown as examples noting that it would be permanent ownership. Ms. Bazazi stated her understanding of revitalization is by bringing up retail and housing together (support each other); and asked Mr. Warner if he had thought about it and how housing fits into the proposal. Mr. Warner stated only if there's a market for housing, the conceptual map shows housing, but there is no layout. Discussion followed in regard to making the garage aesthetically pleasing and the buffer (full and thick).

8. Approval/Correction of the Minutes

Corrections to the 20 June 2019 minutes: page 1, Public Comment, second sentence – end sentence at “Haddam” and delete “and that other” and page 2, fifth paragraph, first sentence – insert “asked” after “Mrs. Block”.

MOTION: Ed Wallor motioned to approve the 20 June 2019 Public Hearing/Meeting minutes as amended. Gina Block second. Motion carried unanimously.

9. Chairman's Report

Mr. Bull had nothing new to report at this time.

10. Scheduling of Hearings

Mr. Warner reported there are no hearings scheduled at this time.

11. Town Planner's Report

Mr. Warner had nothing further to report at this time.

12. Adjournment

MOTION: Ed Wallor motioned to adjourn. Wayne LePard second. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bunny Hall Batzner

Bunny Hall Batzner
Recording Clerk

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 1 August 2019.