

**TOWN OF DARIEN
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 12, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: First Selectman Jayme Stevenson; Kip Koons, Susan Marks, Rob Richards, Marc Thorne.

OTHERS: Kathleen Clarke Buch, Town Administration; Mr. Chris Filmer, Darien Land Trust Trustee; Mr. Charles Goodyear, Darien Land Trust Trustee

CALL TO ORDER.

First Selectman Stevenson called the meeting to order at 9:39 a.m. A quorum was present. She informed the viewers that the Board of Selectmen was trying something new by having the Board meetings following the quarterly Department meetings.

PUBLIC COMMENT.

There was no one from the public who wished to comment at this time.

**PRESENTATION
Darien Land Trust Acquisition.**

First Selectman Stevenson said that the Town has been interested in purchasing 41 Hecker Avenue. She gave a brief overview of the history and said that The Town had been given a grant by the State. The Darien Land Trust has come forward to present the Town with the possibility of financial donation towards the purchase of this parcel.

Mr. Chris Filmer, the past president of the Darien Land Trust and current Darien Land Trust Trustee, and Mr. Charles Goodyear, another Land Trustee came forward to address the Board. (See attached report.)

FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT.

First Selectman Stevenson said that there would be a program at Darien High School on the 19th called "Got Resilience" for parents helping their children through transitional stages.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT.

Ms. Buch reported that the Budget process is well underway. A suggestion had been made that it might be good to invite F&B and the BOF to attend one of the final

meetings, so they can see where the budget is headed and questions can be answer once rather than having department heads answering the same question repeatedly.

NEW BUSINESS

Transfer

Police Salary Adjustments

Ms. Buch gave a brief overview of the details of the transfer.

**** MR. KOONS MOVED THE FOLLOWING:**

RESOLVED:

That the following transfer of appropriation is approved for referral to the Board of Finance.

THAT THE FOLLOWING TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATIONS IS APPROVED:

From:			To:		
Acct. Num.	Acct. Name	Amount	Acct. Num.	Acct. Name	Amount
10704000-86001	Salary Contingency	\$216,146	Various	Police Full Time	\$216,687
10302233-81008	Step Increase	541			

**** MR. RICHARDS SECONDED.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Discuss Board of Selectmen Goals and Objectives.

First Selectman Stevenson distributed copies of an outline of possible goals and objectives for the Board to consider. She said that it was a work in progress and could be changed. First Selectman Stevenson said that she would like to encourage the Board Members to take the outline and add their comments. Discussion followed.

First Selectman Stevenson said she would like the Board to consider if the mission statement needed to be changed. Discussion followed.

**** MS. MARKS MOVED TO SUSTAIN THE CURRENT MISSION STATEMENT FOR BOARD OF SELECTMEN.**

**** MR. RICHARDS SECONDED.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

AGENDA REVIEW

First Selectman Stevenson said that the budget was underway and that the Hecker Avenue proposal will be coming back to the Board for further consideration. First Selectman Stevenson added that Eversource was proposing a LED lighting program that needs to be discussed.

Ms. Marks said that she wanted to discuss parking in the near future. Mr. Thorne said that the study seemed to indicate that there was a need for more active management. First Selectman Stevenson said that somehow the Parking Committee did not receive copies of the parking study and she would like to forward that study to them for their comments.

Mr. Richards pointed out that the Heights project was underway and this would have an impact. First Selectman Stevenson said that the Town has an obligation to provide parking for the commuters. While there are a number of aspects to be discussed, it was a separate issue. Discussion followed about the restrictions on the use of parking revenue and Transit Orientated Development.

Ms. Buch made a note of these suggestions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Executive Session of December 28, 2015

**** MS. MARKS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING OF DECEMBER 28, 2015.**

**** MR. KOONS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR IN FAVOR (STEVENSON, KOONS, MARKS AND THORNE) AND ONE ABSTENTION (RICHARDS).**

Regular Meeting of December 28, 2015

The following correction was noted:

Page 1, under **New Business**, a) Discuss and Take Action on Tax Appeal Settlement
MOTION: Please change the following from:

**** MR. THORNED SECONDED.**

To:

**** MR. THORNE SECONDED.**

**** MR. THORNE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 28, 2015 AS CORRECTED.**

**** MR. KOONS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR IN FAVOR (STEVENSON, KOONS, MARKS AND THORNE) AND ONE ABSTENTION (RICHARDS).**

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

January 12, 2016, Board of Finance 7:30 p.m.
January 12, 2016 Board of Education 7:30 p.m.
January 25, 2016, Board of Selectmen 7:00 p.m.
January 25, 2016, RTM 8:00 p.m.
January 26, 2016 Board of Education 7:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT.

**** MS. MARKS MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** MR. RICHARDS SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

Presentation by Chris Filmer to the Darien
Board of Selectman. Town Hall January 12
2016 re:-

**THE TOWN'S ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY
ON HECKER AVENUE**

Introduction

Good morning , I am Chris Filmer a Trustee of the Darien Land Trust and its immediate past president.

We are here today to talk about a proposal for the Land Trust (the DLT) to assist the Town of Darien in purchasing a 1.2 acre parcel of land on Hecker Avenue currently owned by the Spring Grove Cemetery Association.

My colleague, Charlie Goodyear, will be talking about the details of this proposal but I'd like to start by giving you a 4 minute background on DLT 's activities and telling you why we believe that it is important for us to help the Town of Darien own this property.

The Town has on two occasions assisted the Land Trust to permanently acquire valuable land for conservation

NOW the reverse is proposed! It is the Land Trust who are to help the Town to acquire land for conservation.. And we proudly acknowledge our assisting role

It comes at a time when open space is a rare commodity.

Our Darien, nestled as it is, on the Connecticut coastline, is a highly desirable residential area. It is only 10,000 acres in size and realtors, developers, buyers & bulldozers have made the most of it. The big loser, in all this, is nature's fauna and flora.

We humans are top of the food chain, with information, intelligence, ability...and a lot to answer for!

We've seen endless building construction and absence of restraint, (* You know.. History keeps an eye on us & I remember when First Selectman Bill Patrick endorsed building Senior Housing in Selleck's Woods)

The land grab, has left us with only about 700 acres that can be termed open space, the majority being golf courses & the Hunt Club,(neither necessarily designed to protect wild life or native vegetation) SO, for that we must mostly rely on the two Town Nature Preserves (90 acres) plus DLT's 200 acres (together less than 3% of the total town acreage)

If we could only redo the past! -Imagine having our own Village Green

Part of DLT 's Mission is to permanently preserve and restore as much remaining potential open space as possible.

To this end we have an Executive Director, 23 trustees and are backed by four hundred members

In the last 15 years we have added over 50 acres to our portfolio that includes wetlands, salt marshes, meadows and woodlands.

Hecker is woodland. Woodland that meets the criteria for “Saving and Restoring”.

With our financial contribution, we will be helping the Town **to own and save** a small but valuable piece of Central Darien. This is consistent with *Chapter 8 of the Town Plan for Conservation & Development*.

Right now, skeptics may see Hecker as a **vacant, neglected urban lot, with no public value.**

As Conservationists we see : wooded 1.2 acres with the three requirements for a wild life sanctuary (however small) namely **Food , Cover and Water**. Indeed, a main feature is water-the Stony Brook river, with its mallards and heron.

-The land does need to be cleared of certain invasive plants, and (with a winding trail,) acquire public recreation benefits

-These are tasks that are very possible.

-We can help guide you in this restoration.

The town could be about to gain a wonderful pocket park, but we need a few people who care..and are able to use a little imagination to make it so.

But let me hand over to Charlie to discuss the proposed transaction

Hecker Acquisition -- Charlie Goodyear comments (Revised)

-- Jamie has given you a brief overview of the proposal but let me add a few comments and then talk about proposed next steps.

-- The Cemetery Association has received permission from Planning and Zoning for construction of a residence on this property. They will use the proceeds from any sale for needed maintenance and the expansion of cemetery plots.

--The opportunity for the Town of Darien to acquire this environmental gem for \$275,000 is a one time event. The one chance to protect the property forever. The alternative for the Cemetery Association is to sell the property for residential development.

--The property is ideally suited for development of a pathway linking Hecker Avenue with its Library and Police Station with the Mather Center and Town Hall.

-- Because of its environmental value and, as Chris mentioned, the Darien Land Trust's interest in helping the Town of Darien maintain its limited open space, our Trustees have agreed to contribute \$137,500 or 50% of the purchase price towards the purchase of the property.

--Through the efforts of your First Selectman, the State of Connecticut has agreed to a grant of \$137,500 to the Town that, together with the Land Trust contribution, would essentially cover the full purchase price.

-- A two stage process has been proposed for the Town to acquire the property and to construct a pathway from Hecker Avenue to the Mather Center and Town Hall

--Stage I would be to seek approval from the various Town bodies to purchase the property for \$275,000 and to grant the Land Trust a Conservation Easement to permanently protect the land as open space.

--Under a Conservation Easement the landowner continues to own and maintain the land but is restricted in terms of how the property can be used and what buildings or other structures can be built on the property. In addition to properties OWNED by the Land Trust, we have a significant number of properties being protected by Conservation Easement agreements with land owners. These agreements run with the property and are perpetual. The agreements stay in force whenever the covered property is sold or transferred.

--The proposed Conservation Easement covering the Hecker property would allow for a pathway to the Mather Center and Town Hall but, to protect its environmental value, would prohibit construction of any permanent structures. As with all Conservation Easements, the Town would be responsible for maintenance.

--The Land Trust stands ready to assist the Selectmen in shepherding the proposal thru the various Town bodies for approval to buy the land.

--Once the property is purchased, Stage II in the overall process would be for the Town to develop a plan for funding and construction of the pathway. The Land Trust has much experience in this area and would be happy to assist in designing it and overseeing construction.

--Chris Filmer has done some work on the pathway regarding the route, the work to be done and a preliminary cost estimate and he will talk about that now.