



Town of Middletown

TOWN HALL 350 EAST MAIN ROAD
MIDDLETOWN, RHODE ISLAND 02842

Minutes

Of the meeting of Monday, May 11, 2009 Middletown, RI Conservation Commission

Present: Gary Paquette, Chair; Bob Johnson; Peter Tarpgaard; Bruce Long; Stan Ehrlich; Betty Jane Owen; Audrey Rearick, Planning Board Liaison

Absent: None

Guests: Mr. Kenneth Walsh, Middletown Historical Society

Old Business: None

New Business: Mr. Ken Walsh of the Middletown Historical Society gave a brief presentation on the proposed Middletown War Memorial Park which the Historical Society proposes to construct on the site of the undeveloped Ray Durfee Memorial. Park located on the southwest corner of the intersection of Valley Road and Green End Avenue. This is the same location that was discussed with the Town Engineer, Warren Hall at the April meeting of the Conservation Commission.

Mr. Walsh gave a detailed history of the land given to the Middletown Historical Society and described the events of the years between 1776 and 1779 when the British occupied Newport. In the intervening years the colonials battled the British, bombarding them from the now Durfee land which is next to Easton's Pond. In order for the Historical Society to proceed with the War Memorial project, various town, state, and federal agencies that have to be approached to meet all legal requirements. Mr. Walsh outlined some of the steps needed to establish the park which would potentially include a parking area, the war memorial, lighting and landscaping. The Society would be searching for a grant to design the park. This would then be presented to the agencies overseeing various aspects of the project.

Various questions were raised regarding the proposed plan. Some questions centered about the physical layout of the memorial while others revolved around the number of agencies to be approached. The ownership of surrounding land was discussed as well as the preliminary observations by CRMC and zoning requirements. The Conservation Commission asked to participate in final review plans as the property involved was adjacent to Easton's Pond



Town of Middletown

TOWN HALL 350 EAST MAIN ROAD
MIDDLETOWN, RHODE ISLAND 02842

The Commission reiterated that the location of the proposed park was in an extremely sensitive area and that the commission was very concerned about the potential adverse environmental impacts that might arise as a result of the completion of this project including:

1. Stormwater runoff issues
2. Use of agricultural chemicals on the property
3. Storage of hazardous materials on the property
4. Increased air and water pollution resulting from the presence of motor vehicles on what heretofore was pristine, open space
5. Trash and litter issues
6. Light pollution arising from any proposed street lighting and/or flagpole and monument illumination.

The Commission thanked Mr. Walsh for his presentation and promised to work closely with the Historical Society and to lend its expertise in order to select the most eco-friendly materials and procedures for the project.

Other Business: Gary Paquette, Chairman, reiterated to the Commission members their obligation to recuse themselves from any Commission deliberations on any case(s) for which they might have an actual or perceived personal interest in the outcome of said deliberations. That said, Mr. Paquette stated that due to his position as a member of the Middletown Historical Society Board of Directors and that he is actively involved in the Middletown War Memorial Park project that he would be obligated to recuse himself from any Commission activities concerning the park project should the Historical Society be required to apply any variances or permits that would require an advisory opinion from the Middletown Conservation Commission.

There being no other business at this time, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 6:45 PM.

Submitted: 5/28/2009
Date

Betty Jane Owen
Signature

The next meeting of the Commission will take place on Monday, June 8th at 5:30pm.