

Naugatuck Cultural Council
Environmental Initiatives Committee

Minutes

August 29, 2012

Naugatuck Savings Bank Community Room, 87 Church St, Naugatuck

Present: Robin Gerber, Lena Warren, Suzanne Flores, Felipe Flores, Chin Sounanthanam, Melissa Leonard, Michael Turman, Vanessa Vowe, Sandra Heller, Monroe Webster, Les Williams, Delores Turman

Meeting called to order by Robin Gerber at 6 p.m.

Suzanne Flores volunteered to take notes and discussion of a future chair was delayed until the end of the meeting.

Unanimous approval of Motion to Approve the Minutes of 7/11/12 except for a request to add the last names of Dolores and Michael Turman.

Michael Turman reported that, for now, the Conservation Commission will operate in an advisory capacity only and that Mayor Mezzo wants to implement it. It would work to guarantee that open space is used appropriately. Next Tuesday, Sept. 4th, the Board of Burgesses will vote whether to adopt this committee. All who can possibly attend should go t speak in support of this commission. Melissa added that right now there are two commissions that decide on land use, Planning and Zoning. Planning only makes recommendations, while Zoning gives approval. Eventually we would like the Conservation Commission to grant approval of projects not just recommendations. Felipe explained that since environmental considerations are usually pushed aside or put on a back burner the need for this commission is crucial Using the example of the recent flooding in Naugatuck, he explained that open space can absorb water and preserve not only a healthy environment but also help taxpayers. The damage done can be costly not only to the town and therefore, taxpayers; residents had to pay out of pocket since most of the flood damage was not covered by insurance.

We have a new member, Lena Warren, pastor of Immanuel and Salem Churches. ,

Robin reported on her conversation with Mayor Mezzo about a community garden. He gave her a 2009 report from the land use office, called Municipal Sports Field Space Needs Analysis and Plan Strategies, to check out possible sites. He was unsure of the ownership of the field behind the Tuttle Building and thought the Eastern Co site might have environmental issues. Overall he was optomistic and supportive.

Suzanne reported that she talked to Mary Davis, president of the Naugatuck Garden Club. Mary explained that behind Tuttle is where the Garden Club has planted several

trees in memory of its past Presidents making it unsuitable for a community garden. She wondered about Parcel C. Parcel C and Lot 5 might be brown fields.

Felipe mentioned that in Washington Depot their Community Garden supplies food for the Food Bank.

Lena Warren, a new member and pastor of Immanuel and Salem Churches, said that Mary is also chairman of the food bank, also known as NEON, Naugatuck Ecumenical Outreach Network. Lena spoke on the benefits of a community garden. Not only is it good for food and creating community it also teaches people gardening. Lena gave a short synopsis of her experience creating community gardens. From a 7 acre garden in downtown Knoxville, a vacant lot in downtown Bridgeport and another in Philadelphia she has gained a lot of experience. Not only does she have a masters in plant and soil sciences she believes community gardens are critical for people's souls. Since its a project that involves people who are already here the town does not have to look outside of itself for help in development. Asked if this idea could involve small plots she answered that it's how it was done in Bridgeport. People learned they didn't need a big plot or expensive tools to grow food. Asked what we'd do in winter Lena answered compost and plan. Melissa agreed to call the Glass Co about a lot near it as a possible garden site. She is also willing to go with Lena to speak to them. Chin suggested the corner of the pubic schools' lots.

Once we have a location we need to speak to Ed Carter.

Robin reminded us of the upcoming Celebration of People on Oct. 13th from 4-7 in Linden Park where we can join forces with others. There will be food vendors, entertainment and a pinata.

Robin has contacted three people about getting a table at the Arts Festival on Sept 29, Melissa Teater, Dave Santamauro and Marianna Hanson.

Felipe Flores agreed to be the next co-chairman for three months.

Our next meeting will be on Thurs., September 13, 2012, at 6 p.m. in the Naugatuck Savings Bank Community Room on 87 Church Street.