

Animal shelter plan draws opposition

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HAMDEN - Some residents who opposed the construction of 72 houses on the former Maselli farm are now speaking out against a plan to build an **animal shelter** at the site.

But Dolores Giannini, chairwoman of the **animal shelter** building committee and president of the Happy Tails Foundation, said the folks are barking up the wrong tree.

Giannini voiced her opinion before the committee that is studying possible uses for the 34-acre farm between Gilbert Avenue and Dunbar Hill Road at the Legislative Council meeting Monday night.

Maselli committee Chairman William Doheny said the committee was working with the **Hamden** Land Conservation Trust to develop an easement that would preserve the property for agricultural purposes, passive recreation and municipal use of up to two acres. The Natural Resources and Open Space Commission has backed the idea.

Giannini said a **shelter** would take up about two acres of the property.

After a builder decided not to construct houses at the former farm, Mayor Craig B. Henrici negotiated for the town to buy the land before it was auctioned off.

"We strongly believe this is an ideal location. It will fulfill the dire need of a town-owned **shelter**," she said.

But then she lashed out at detractors: "I'm really troubled by the attitude of some folks. We have a situation where you have volunteers who spend endless hours meeting the needs of the economically troubled, the senior citizens, the disabled folks. What kind of a community are we that we cannot fulfill an obligation that other towns fulfill and set aside two of the 34 acres to show we're human beings?" Giannini was referring to the fact that **Hamden** doesn't have an **animal shelter**. In years past, the town rented space at Merryfield **Animal Hospital** and in recent years has rented six kennels at the North Haven **Animal Shelter**.

"Maybe some of you despise animals.

I can respect that, but we do not have a proper facility. Shame on us," she added.

Republican mayoral candidate Ronald Gambardella, who lives close to the Maselli farm on Ingleside Drive, John Kristoff of Gilbert Avenue and Bill Burns of Dunbar Hill Road opposed placing an **animal shelter** at the site.

Gambardella said he thought it would be an intrusion. "We absolutely need one, but other locations are more suitable, like the Dadio farm, where people can walk along the Farmington Canal and see the animals," Gambardella said.

Henrici Tuesday said it is "irresponsible" for Gambardella to say the **shelter** could be sited at the Dadio farm on Putnam Avenue when the property has been subdivided for industrial uses and the new fire station.

"We're hoping to have a conservation easement for all, if not a large part, of the Maselli farm.

I think that two of the 34 acres should be suitable for an **animal shelter** and should not be in a location to upset any neighborhood," Henrici said.

Gambardella said he supports agricultural activities on the site.

The Maselli committee has taken applications from several farmers who want to farm there.