

Hamden seeking ideas for site use

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HAMDEN - Town officials are looking for input on how to best use 34 acres that are home to a former apple orchard, overgrown brush, a post-and-beam barn, an 1880s farmhouse and plenty of poison ivy.

An informal study committee headed by William Doheny is taking suggestions on what to do with the former Maselli farm on Gilbert Avenue.

The property had been approved for 72 houses, something neither town officials nor neighbors wanted, but which was ordered by the Superior Court. Eventually, the developer dropped the plans, and the town purchased the land using \$1.56 million from an open space acquisition fund.

The Dunbar Hill Civic Association led the charge in trying to keep the land free from development, because the area already is densely populated.

Residents were worried additional houses would strain the school system and town services.

One of the association's leaders, Michele Mastropetre, is on the committee along with Doheny, **Hamden** Land Trust President Andy Brand and Councilmen Kathleen Schomaker, D-5, and Michael Colaiacovo, D-7.

Doheny, a member of the Natural Resources and Open Space and Historic Properties commissions, said Mayor Craig B. Henrici asked him to form a land use committee for the property.

"I've left it in the hands of the committee to get me a list of options," Henrici said.

The committee has received several proposals, but now wants to open the process to the entire community. "We've been doing it by word of mouth and going to the civic association, but that's not counting the rest of the town. We're just looking for input of what people would like to see and not like to see. It's in a part of town where there isn't much open space," Doheny said.

Hamden Happy Tails Foundation President Dolores Giannini has presented

plans for the town's animal shelter to be built on just under 2 acres there. Henrici said he would like to put the shelter there because a site on Rocky Top Road is no longer possible.

Doheny said the animal shelter hasn't been ruled out, but the committee would like reusable uses for the property. A location for the shelter hasn't been specified on the site. The committee also has received proposals ranging from a sheep farm, to a community-supported farm, a garden for disabled citizens and a site to cut hay.

Doheny wants the property to be developed at little or no cost to the town, and for the land to be open to the public.

Anyone with ideas is encouraged to call him at 288-1831, or write him at 220 Mountain Road, Hamden 06514.