

Blighted property procedure drafted following increase in complaints

By Sloan Brewster
Senior Staff Writer

SIMSBURY - Simsbury's town attorneys have drafted a procedure for dealing with blighted property.

At the July 23 Board of Selectmen meeting town attorneys Robert DeCrescenzo and Kevin McEleney presented their plans to make enforcing zoning complaints relative to blighted properties easier and swifter.

An increase in complaints led to selectmen asking the attorneys to look over local ordinances and come back with a report and procedure, First Selectman Mary Glassman said.

"Could we possibly streamline the process to make it go quicker because there was a sense of frustration about how long it takes," DeCrescenzo elaborated. "There are a small number of really hard cases that are disruptive to the neighborhood... Every town in the state is experiencing the same issue with increases in blights due to increased foreclosures."

After the attorneys looked over the ordinances with a "critical eye," DeCrescenzo explained that McEleney put together a blight enforcement handbook, which he will tweak, based on ideas from town officials.

Once the tweaks are completed

the book will be distributed to town staff.

The plan they came up with is contingent upon having a blight enforcement officer and a blight prevention officer. The two staff members would work together, with the prevention officer determining if a property is blighted and the enforcement officer resolving the situation through enforcement action, McEleney said.

Glassman clarified that the town would not be increasing staff or hiring new people, but would use existing staff to complete the responsibilities.

"None of what we're talking about changes the substance of the blight ordinance," McEleney said, explaining that it would just help to get something accomplished once a complaint has been registered. "For every blighted property there's an entire neighborhood that's affected by that blight."

DeCrescenzo added that the attorneys are also recommending that selectmen consider tightening the ordinances to make them a little stricter, but said for now the procedure will straighten things out and enhance timelines.

"Nothing's more frustrating than to have someone come in with a property and nothing appears to happen for weeks and months," he said.



The town will apply for \$500,000 in STEAP grants for improvements at Holcomb Farm.
Photo by Jennifer Senofonte

Town seeks STEAP funds for Holcomb Farm

By Jennifer Senofonte
Staff Writer

GRANBY- The Town of Granby will apply for a Small Town Economic Assistant Program grant in the amount of \$500,000 to make improvements at Holcomb Farm.

Town Manager Bill Smith said the grant, if awarded, will fund parking and structure improvements at the farm, a town-owned asset that the town is now fully responsible for following the board's approval of a recent memorandum of understanding.

The MOU was put together in an effort to continue education, agriculture, arts and recreational activities at Holcomb Farm with little funds available.

The document aimed to continue and restructure the goals maintained by Holcomb Farm, Inc. by transferring complete ownership to the town.

"We received previous grants from [STEAP] and they've been quite successful," Smith said, noting recent projects such as sidewalks for Granby Center and

Salmon Brook Pond House improvements.

"Right now at Holcomb Farm it's very rudimentary and not well-defined parking out there," he added. "We want to make it more applicable and approachable and [define space] for cars to park in a safe manner."

In addition, he requested that additional funds be provided to assist with renovation to some of the buildings and structures on the farm that need to be rebuilt.

According to the minutes from the special Board of Selectmen meeting held July 20, the town has already developed a rough outline to construct a more useful design for the entrances and for safety.

"There was nothing on Holcomb Farm and that's one of the main reasons we're trying to focus on making improvements out there," Smith said regarding the use of recent STEAP grants.

The Board of Selectmen approved a resolution allowing the town manager to move forward with the STEAP application process at the special meeting.

Resident talks about work with monks

Continued from page 21

connected with the director of Atma Seva through a family friend.

"I was eager to get out of the house since I was a year out of college," Poppe said. "The timing worked out, so I went to Bangkok."

Poppe's work through Atma Seva has been placing volunteers to teach conversational English to Buddhist monks. The volunteers get to work and live at the monasteries, where Poppe himself resides. His role in the process is that of a liaison between the monks and the volunteers. He described the relationship between the monks and the volunteers as "trusting and mutual."

Poppe is currently working with 18 temples for the conversational English program. He has also helped set up a scholarship program with the monks to enable them to attend high school and university, as well as beginning the task of building a school for underprivileged children.

Another unique program being launched by Atma Seva is "monk chats," where people can pay \$10 per person for an hour-long video conference with Buddhist monks. Poppe said the chats are a chance for people to learn about Thai culture and Buddhism firsthand, with all of the money going towards their scholarship program.

The ultimate goal for Poppe and Atma Seva is to connect with study abroad and gap year programs to recruit volunteers. They are looking for people to come to Thailand for six months or a year.

Poppe said he enjoys working with Atma Seva "because the end goal is positive change," something he feels passionate about. "I fell in love with northern Thailand, but my goal is not specific to one region." He said Thailand is a very easy place to live, as the culture is interesting, the people are friendly and he has enjoyed learning about Buddhism.

Poppe is returning to Thailand in early August to continue his work with Atma Seva.

For more information on Atma Seva, visit www.atmaseva.org or www.facebook.com/atmaseva.

Professional Body Work and Painting

Edward Motor Service, Inc.

General Repairs • Body Work • Painting • Frame Straightening
24 Hour Wrecker Service • Complete Auto/Truck Repairs

Phone (860) 673-2631
or (860) 673-2446 Cell 860-883-9269
16 New Britain Avenue, Unionville • Family Tradition Since 1948

DAWN COOLEY, D.M.D.
FAMILY DENTISTRY

36 MAIN STREET, RTE 4 • UNIONVILLE, CT • 06085 • 860-673-9770

Dr. Dawn Cooley was born and raised in a small town in the foothills of the Adirondack Mountains of Upstate New York. After completing her undergraduate degree at Hartwick College in Oneonta, NY, she relocated to Connecticut to attend the University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine. She performed her General Practice Residency at Hartford Hospital and has been in practice in the Greater Hartford Area for 10 years. Dr. Cooley has attended a multitude of continuing education courses throughout the years including extensive Cosmetic Dentistry courses. She is currently accepting new patients and is looking forward to serving the community.

NOW ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS

- Convenient early morning & Saturday hours available
- Family dentistry
- State-of-the-art equipment
- Tooth whitening procedures
- Most insurances accepted

"They were wonderful!"

We hear kind words consistently. We're proud that people feel comfortable enough with us to openly tell us how much they appreciate what we did for them. In fact, it's this appreciation that drives us to offer the very best in comfort, compassion and service.

VINCENT FUNERAL HOME

Canton (860) 693-0251
Simsbury (860) 658-7613
www.vincentfuneralhome.com