



Legislation Text

File #: 22-151, Version: 1

AGENDA REQUEST GENERAL DISCUSSION ITEM

Subject:

Discussion regarding Mr. Moriarty's proposal dated July 13, 2022 regarding a Ledyard Garden.

Background:

Mr. Moriarty submitted a proposal to start and operate an organic no-till vegetable garden in a portion of the cleared green that lies to the south of the Nathan Lester House.(see attached)

Department Comment/Recommendation:

(type text here)

LUPPW Cmt Meeting 9/19/2022

File #: [22151 <https://ledyardct.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5741905&GUID=2ABD3A73-2ADB-4229-A39C-6113F3409910>](https://ledyardct.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5741905&GUID=2ABD3A73-2ADB-4229-A39C-6113F3409910) Version: 1

Type: General Discussion

Title: Discussion regarding Mr. Moriarty's proposal dated July 13, 2022 regarding a Ledyard Garden.

Action: Completed

Minutes Note:

Mr. Sean Moriarty, 24 Partridge Hollow Road, Gales Ferry, thanked the Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee for inviting him to discuss his proposal for a Ledyard Garden. He stated the idea was simple, noting that food security was a real concern, not just for towns like Ledyard, but nationwide, and globally. He stated most of the food we all depend on comes from thousands of miles away, and that they need to begin addressing farming practices town by town. He stated he would like to see Ledyard start a garden farm, noting that there were a number of ways this could be accomplished. He addressed the types of soil, using organic matter and a variety of other requirements to provide for a successful garden farm for Ledyard; and that he would like to get this type of initiative started.

Councilor Rodriguez stated that she read Mr. Moriarty's proposal for a "*Ledyard Garden*" and that she liked his idea. She stated when she first began reading the Garden Proposal she thought that this would be a "Community Garden" and that some of the produce would be donated to the Linda C. Davis Food Pantry. However, she stated as she continued to read Mr. Moriarty's proposal she understood that the produce would be sold.

Councilor Rodriguez continued by noting that she had the following concerns regarding Mr. Moriarty's

proposed location of the Garden at the Nathan Lester House. She stated the area where Mr. Moriarty would like to put the Garden was in the overflow parking lot, which was frequently used during events such as the Holiday Caroling and the July 4th Celebration as well as Boy Scout Events and School Events. She suggested Mr. Moriarty talk with the Historic District Commission and the Agriculture Commission about his proposal, noting that the Historic District Commission, was also meeting this evening at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. She also noted that the Agricultural Commission was planning a Joint Work Session on October 18, 2022 with all of the town's land use commissions and that they may be able to help Mr. Moriarty find a suitable location for his Garden proposal and also provide some guidance regarding the town's requirements.

Chairman Dombrowski stated he was intrigued by Mr. Moriarty's Garden proposal; and that he agreed with Councilor Rodriguez in that he did not believe the Nathan Lester House was going to be a good location for the Garden for a number of reasons, which included Councilor Rodriguez's concern regarding the loss of the overflow parking lot area. He stated that he also had concerns regarding the following:

- Building a Greenhouse on the Nathan Lester House property.
- Building a Storage Shed.
- Installing Cooling Units
- Using the Nathan Lester House Barn.
- Cost of electricity and water.

Chairman Dombrowski continued by providing a brief overview of the process to use town property noting some of requirements were as follows:

- Planning & Zoning Commission would be required to conduct an 8-24 Review to ensure the proposal was in-keeping with the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD)
- Lease would need to be drafted
- Public Hearing would be required
- Town Council would be required to approve the Lease

Chairman Dombrowski went on to explain that they would also need to consider whether there were any restrictions on a private indivial using the Historic property for a business that the town would not benefit from. Therefore, he stated the Historic Nathan Lester House may not be the right property for Mr. Moriarty's proposed Ledyard Garden.

Chairman Dombrowski suggested that Mr. Moriarty may want to consider other properties that would not impact historic properties, would be close to residential areas, and would have water and electricity available such as the 1.50-acre parcel on Village Drive. He noted when Village Drive was first constructed they had a community well to support the homes in the neighborhood. He stated when public water came through the area the residents connected to the water line and the community well was abandoned. Therefore, he stated Mr. Moriarty may want to consider leasing the Village Drive parcel for his proposed "*Ledyard Garden*".

Mr. Moriarty stated his Ledyard Garden proposal was open to what the town would like to do. He stated the bottom line was that there was currently no food production in Ledyard. He explained that it was the

idea/concept of a Ledyard Garden, that he was looking to create, stating that he was fine with using a different site and with donating the food produced by the Ledyard Garden to the Linda C. Davis Food Pantry, if that was what the town wanted to do.

Chairman Dombrowski stated the town currently leased a portion of the Clark Farm (1025 Colonel Ledyard Highway) to Mr. Majcher, and that the town could do something similar for Mr. Moriarty, if they could find a suitable location that would meet his needs (water & electricity).

Councilor Rodriguez noted that she initially thought the Clark Farm would be a good site for Mr. Moriarty's proposed Ledyard Garden. However, she stated she later realized that the Clark Farm did not have the infrastructure needed to support Mr. Moriarty's proposal, noting there was no water or electricity at that site. She noted, as Chairman Dombrowski suggested that Mr. Moriarty may want to consider the property on Village Drive or that perhaps a private farmer may be interested in leasing some land to Mr. Moriarty.

Chairman Dombrowski stated in 2017 *The Arc of Eastern Connecticut* approached the Town to lease property for a Community Supported Agricultural (CSA) program that would involve a Farm Stand. He stated the LUPPW Committee discussed several properties with *The Arc* and he noted that most town-owned open space parcels, including the Clark Farm, were not suitable for the CSA because they did not have water or electricity. However, he stated during the exercise they identified the 1.50-acre parcel on Village Drive that could support such an initiative, as he noted earlier this evening, and that they also considered the open field going to the Transfer Station, however, he stated they ran into the same issues of no water and no power at that site.

Chairman Dombrowski stated he believed Mr. Moriarty's proposal for a Ledyard Garden was a wonderful idea. However, he stated they needed to find a suitable location.

Councilor Paul stated Mr. Moriarty's proposed Ledyard Garden was well thought out and that he liked the idea. He questioned how Mr. Moriarty came up with the Garden idea. Mr. Moriarty stated the Covid-19 Pandemic got him thinking about the importance to have food grown/produced locally.

The LUPPW Committee suggested Mr. Moriarty contact Agricultural Commission Chairman Bruce Garstka, noting that he would be a good resource.

Councilor Rodriguez suggested Mr. Moriarty attend the Agricultural Commission's October 18, 2022 Meeting; noting that they would be hosting a joint meeting at which all Town's Land Use Commissions would be in attendance. She also noted that there may be some other young people who would be interested in joining Mr. Moriarty's in working to create and operate a Ledyard Garden.

Mr. Moriarty stated his hope was that the Town would be able to put the Ledyard Garden under the town's umbrella. However, he stated if the town could not take on the project and he was going to have to lease land from the town that perhaps he would just move forward in a different direction and work on growing the Garden on his own. He thanked the LUPPW Committee for the information they provided and for talking with him this evening.

Councilor Paul thanked Mr. Moriarty for attending tonight's meeting.

Mr. Moriarty left the meeting at 6:22 p.m.

Action: Completed

LUPPW Cmt Meeting 8/1/2022

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Minutes Note:

Councilor Rodriguez stated that she read Mr. Moriarty's entire proposal for a "*Ledyard Garden*" and that she liked his idea. However, she expressed concern regarding Mr. Moriarty's proposed location of the Garden at the Nathan Lester House. She stated the area where Mr. Moriarty would like to put the Garden was in the overflow parking lot, which was frequently used during events such as the Holiday Caroling and the July 4th Celebration. She suggested Mr. Moriarty talk with the Historic District Commission and the Agriculture Commission about his proposal.

Councilor Marshall expressed concern about Mr. Moriarty using the Nathan Lester House property for a Garden and then charging the public for the produce he would be growing on the town-owned property. He stated he did not think that this was an appropriate use of the town-owned historic property.

Chairman Dombrowski stated he was intrigued by Mr. Moriarty's Garden proposal; however, he did not believe the Nathan Lester House was going to be a good location for the Garden for a number of reasons, which included Councilor Rodriguez's concern regarding the loss of the overflow parking lot area. He stated that he also had concerns regarding the following:

- Building a Greenhouse on the Nathan Lester House property.
- Building a Storage Shed.
- Using the Nathan Lester House Barn.
- Cost of electricity and water.

Chairman Dombrowski stated in 2017 the Arc of Eastern Connecticut approached the Town to lease property for a Community Supported Agricultural (CSA) program that would involve a Farm Stand. He stated the LUPPW Committee discussed several properties with Arc and he noted that most town-owned open space parcels, including the Clark Farm, were not suitable for the CSA because they did not have water or electricity. However, he stated during the exercise they identified a 1.50-acre parcel on Village Drive that could support such an initiative. He explained when Village Drive was first constructed they had a community well to support the homes in the neighborhood. However, he stated when public water came through the area the residents connected to the water line and the community well was abandoned. Therefore, he stated Mr. Moriarty may want to consider leasing the Village Drive parcel for his proposed "*Ledyard Garden*".

Chairman Dombrowski continued by addressing the process to lease town-owned land, noting that the Planning

& Zoning Commission would be required to conduct an 8-24 Review to determine whether it was a suitable use of the property and in accordance with CGS 163(e) the Town Council would be required to hold a Public Hearing.

Councilor Paul stated he found Mr. Moriarty's "*Ledyard Garden*" proposal interesting and that his resume' and farming background was impressive.

The LUPPW Committee agreed to send Mr. Moriarty a letter to invite him to their September 13, 2022 special meeting to explain the process to become involved in a venture with the town and to discuss his interest in perhaps considering a different location for his proposed "*Ledyard Garden*".

Action: Continue