

REPRESENTATIVE POLICY BOARD

**LAND USE COMMITTEE**

DECEMBER 11, 2024

MEETING TRANSCRIPTION

Mark:

I will call the meeting to order. Can we do the safety moment? Okay. Holiday safety tips. Wow, there's a lot of them. Electrical decorations. Do not overload electrical outlets. Never connect more than three strings of candelent light. Keep tree fresh from watering. Use battery-operated candles. That's for sure. I can tell you a story about candles.

Keep combustibles at least three feet away. Use battery [inaudible 00:01:15]. Protect cords from damage and check decorations to certification label. Stay in the kitchen when something is cooking. That is very important.

Turn off, unplug, and extinguish all decorations when going to sleep or leaving the house. Boy, those are all good ones. Except I'm Jewish. The only ones that help me would be don't leave the kitchen. Okay. I hate leaving the kitchen when something's cooking, so just remember that, guys.

Can I have a motion to accept our minutes?

Greg:

Accept the motion.

Mike:

Mike Horbal approves.

Mark:

Mike Horbal approves. Thanks. All those in favor?

Committee members:

Aye.

Mark:

Opposed? Okay, the minutes pass. Now, next. The next thing on the agenda is the vault. I saw that picture. That was cool. This is you John, right?

John:

Yes.

Mark:

Is that your vault?

John:

This is our vault. It's not mine. It's ours.

Mark:

Let me just ask you something. Do you have the combination to that yourself?

John:

No.

Mark:

Okay.

John:

But I'll tell you why it doesn't matter. So, last month you had asked for the special topic to be the vault. And that's we're talking about today. What you're looking at is the door to the vault. Remember that this building was built by Blakeslee. So, the engineers will tell you it's more like a bridge than it is a building.

And the vault was here. It is a large safe, just like you would have in a bank. And when the water company bought the property in 1977, they sold the Crown Street building a year later. People would come in here and pay their water bill with cash. And at that time, cash did go into the vault. So, it was important to lock it every night. And they did know what the combination was.

However, 10 years ago or so, we decided that it's better, and it had a working lock until about 10 years ago. And we decided it's prudent just to get the locking mechanism off of it because we don't keep money or any valuables in there anymore. So, we had a locksmith come and take the locking mechanism out. So, to answer your question, Mark, nobody will be ever locked in there. You cannot lock yourself in.

So, in here, there is a special fire suppressant system in there, not water, to protect the fragile older documents. In the vault, there are financial records, there's PILOT and tax records. There are historic records. There are old scrapbooks in there, photo albums, even glass negatives, glass slides from the '30s and '40s and maybe even '20s for forestry.

There are copies of critical documents such as there are, I believe, multiple editions of the water supply plan are in there. And then there are land records, and that's what I'm going to talk about today. So, you can hit the next one.

Jamie:

The records, are they just from New Haven, or did Birmingham's records come over here too?

John:

I'll get to that.

Jamie:

Okay.

John:

So, in a town, for your land records, you go to the town clerk, and you file it there. The stuff on the land records and the town's pretty much chronological, although it does vary for various reasons. And it will say that the deed is recorded on a volume or a book and then the page within the book.

For ours, our deeds and our easements and our agreements and so forth, they're in different series, and the series have these letter assignments. So, most of it's geographic based, such as ours for, Branford. P includes Cheshire and Prospect. Y is North Branford and so on and so forth.

There are some miscellaneous and sundried categories. M is miscellaneous, J is also sundry. And then there are other things that we don't use anymore that I would say that are no longer vault-worthy, in air quotes, such as the contracts that are under the L and the T. Then there's also things like ordinances, zoning, we don't use B anymore. I don't know what's in there.

There is some cool stuff in the contracts including, I believe, the first file in the L is actually the original contract to build the Lake Whitney Dam, from 1860 whatever. And we've had that scanned, so engineering has looked at that in preparation for the work that they're doing in the next year or two.

So, this is the filing system within the vault. And this is when I get something for say Killingworth, it goes under X. All right, you can go to the next one, Jen. Or actually, let me go back to this one. Go back one, to answer Jamie's question.

So, when we bought BUI, we had several boxes of deeds and agreements and easements and so forth. And Diane just kept them in her office. She didn't file them, but we didn't do things in the BUI system when she was still here.

And so, when those came in, she did them, such as the sale of the old headquarters on Beaver Street in Ansonia, it went under M. You can see it there, BUI some located here. That's my note there.

If we scroll up, Jen. Scroll up at the very bottom. Then around 2014 or so I said, "Okay, I've got to put these into the vault. I need them categorized."

And we have a database that is searchable that I can find anything by date, by name of the grantor or grantee, by town, by street, etc., and so on. And so, I made U is what I took all the BUI files and started slowly just cataloging them into the system under U, because people would come to me. Like Bob Daly would come to me and say, "Do we have an easement in Ansonia for this?"

I'm like, "I have no idea. It's in one of these boxes over here." And it was unsustainable. I had to get through them and put them into the system so that I could find things when people asked questions. So, you can go to the next slide, Jen.

What it looks like is this. These are those movable shelves. On the left are all the envelopes. So, when something comes in, and everything gets an envelope for the people at home I'm showing you what an envelope looks like. It has the prefix, the series F, in this case F is the West River Series. It would be Bethany Woodbridge. And then the number of the file just goes in sequentially, whatever comes in.

So, this one F162 is actually for a property that's close to Mark's house on Dylan Road that came in, I think it was around 1900 or so. If something is larger, and what happens, it gets the envelope. So, let's see, we have a D, but it's got more things and it's not going to fit in an envelope. Then it gets a little stamp here. It says additional data in property file.

And what happens, it goes to what looks like a doctor's file, has a little tab here that equates to what's in the envelope. And this is actually the property that's across from your house, Bob. This is the Wallace property.

So, everything goes into the database, so if I want to see whatever you sold to someone who had the first name or last name of Wallace, and just put it in there, and it will have a complete printout or return everything that meets my criteria.

So, on the left-hand side are the envelopes. On the top you can see those bound things, those are appraisals. The Maltby series used to be an A, but now the appraisals are an A. And if you look at the

middle left section there where it says I, if you blew it up enough it would say Maltby area because all the Maltby stuff got moved to I many years ago before I started using it. Next slide.

So, when you turn and look on the other side of the aisle, here's where all the folders are. And again, just in the same system where it's all mostly by geography. Next.

All right, so there aren't that many. There's a couple of cool things that are in there. One, I brought them here to show you that there's no autographs from Eli Whitney. He died in 1825. So, nothing. We are much later than that.

But this one right here, we have the H series is for the oyster lots. So, the New Haven Water Company used to have possession of oyster lots within New Haven Harbor, but also they put in agreements and other matters that had to do with New Haven Harbor in there.

And one of them was from 1896 where we were putting to certify that the secretary of war, everybody gives their permissions and sent New Haven Water Company to excavate across the bed of the Quinnipiac River at a line of about 300, 400 feet south from the Grand Avenue Bridge at said place and to lay a 24-inch water pipe at that depth between harbor lines, not less than 15 feet below, meaning below water, upon the following conditions, blah, blah, blah. That main is still there, and we still use it. And this was signed by Daniel Lamont who was the secretary of war 24th of April 1896. So, you know who his boss was? You want to take a guess?

Jamie:

18 what?

John:

1896.

Greg:

That's a lot of presidents.

John:

Yeah. His boss was William McKinley, who was president at the time.

Mark:

Yeah?

John:

So, a member of the cabinet, of the United States cabinet, has signed one of our documents up there.

Jamie:

Is he related to [inaudible 00:11:33]?

John:

I think this guy was from New York, so maybe. I don't know. It's a pretty common name. What you're seeing up here is that Diane started scanning our vault so that we could have it quickly pulled up. When I

look at the database, I can click a button, and then I can have the contents of the vault right in front of me. I wouldn't have to go into it.

And when I would do that, and she stopped at D, we go from A to Z. And after about two or three years I'm like, "I've got to pick up where Diane left off."

So, I started doing it, and I pick up the file and review them quickly just to look at it and make sure I had everything before I sent it off to be scanned. And you probably know. When you buy a property, if I'm buying Pete's land, he gives me a deed, so I have his signature on it, says it's from DeSantis, "Here you go." He gives me the file and the land records, and I have it in my possession after it's filed.

Now, he could have or should have the deed from his predecessor, his grantor. And if he chooses, there's no more value into it after he gives me his deed, but he may give me that deed as well so that I have the grantor before him. So, I have a longer chain of title, just holding it myself.

And in some of these we do see that those earlier deeds were given to the New Haven Water Company, and the earliest one that I saw initially when I was going through the files to scan was 1812. I'm like, "Wow, that's pretty cool." It's over 200 years earlier than when I was sending this out to be scanned. You think about Abraham Lincoln was three years old when this thing was written, and that this guy who did it, he could have served in the Revolutionary War. He may have voted for George Washington. I don't know.

Well, as I kept going on, now I get to Y, which is North Branford, and in one of the files Y4 is from the Harrison family. And they must have had somebody who collected the old deeds. And then once it got conveyed to us, they must have had somebody who didn't care about the collection of old deeds.

So, the whole thing came to us. And what you're looking at here is the deed, the earliest one from Israel Baldwin deed to Josiah Harrison. I don't know what that word says. Recorded November 9th, 1748 in Branford, sixth book of records, page 732-3. And it was then another guy, I think it was either his father or the same guy, was Israel Baldwin was the town clerk of Branford at that time.

So, if you go to the next slide. We have three, [inaudible 00:14:11], I have them here if you want to look for the people who are in the room before you leave tonight, three deeds in our file that are not between Americans but are between British subjects because they predate the revolution and pre-date 1776.

So, the quote, I just like reading this stuff. At the very end, if you scroll down, Jen, said, "Israel Baldwin do hereby," and I might have some of these words wrong, "By myself, my heirs, forever to war and defend the above granted and bargain premises to him said Josiah Harrison and his heirs and signs against all claims and demands whatsoever. And witness, I have held my hand this seventh day of November on the 22nd year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord George, the Second of Great Britain, the King, anno domini 1748."

That's the oldest one. And I don't know, does anyone know when George Washington was born? 1732. So, Washington was 16 years old when this deed was executed in Branford. I'm guessing nobody ever heard George Washington, and up at the top it says the Colony of Connecticut.

So, it's pretty interesting stuff. You think that, okay, this piece of paper here was from a tree that was probably sprouted into the 1600s, made into pulp and then made into a paper. This one is all here, and the other two that pre-date 1776 do have actual printing on them. And you can see when you look at the other side of the piece of paper how the impression of the print really made a depression, an impression onto the paper itself.

So, that's the width and breadth of the vault. If anyone has any questions, I'll be happy to answer any.

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Mark:

Where is the vault located?

John:

It's on the second floor. If you know where the back row is where most of the vice presidents sit. It's at the far end away. Where Larry's office is, you go the entire other way of the vault, and that's where it sits.

Mark:

Okay.

Pete:

I have a question, John. You said the fire suppression is not water. What is that system that's in the [inaudible 00:16:14]?

John:

It's chemical. I don't know. I don't remember the thing. Bob might know.

Bob:

[inaudible 00:16:19] There's some of them that... Some of them are [inaudible 00:16:26] systems.

John:

Correct.

Bob:

[inaudible 00:16:26] They're not good [inaudible 00:16:26].

Greg:

[inaudible 00:16:26] the oxygen.

Bob:

Yeah. That's what I say a lot of times to suppress the fire, they just remove the oxygen. [inaudible 00:16:44]

John:

It's just to prevent water from damaging-

Bob:

Damaging the boxes.

John:

All of the records. Yeah.

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Pete:

The other question I have is Harrison there in Branford. Now, Harrison had a lot of property in North Branford. Going back to this date, 1748, is that before they split Branford into North Branford also?

John:

Yes.

Pete:

That's right.

John:

So, if you-

Pete:

It just says Branford.

John:

It's hard to read because it's all handwritten, but let's see if I can find it. What it says up here, and this is definitely our property that's in North Branford, but this was all part of Branford at the time.

Pete:

[inaudible 00:17:18] Yes.

John:

Remember that as the New Haven colony came in first, then they made divisions. So, they would have a first division that went out where they assigned land, say, in Hamden. The second division was maybe like North Haven, the third division was Woodbridge and so on and so forth. So, up here it says 56 rods, blah, blah, blah. In the fifth and seventh division land lying in the something township of Branford, and then it goes on something further. Great Hill Northward. Great Hill Northward. What is that? That's the Tucker Bridge they're talking about there. That's the Great Hill. And the road that we go up to and go out of is Great Hill Road.

Pete:

Great Hill Road, yeah.

John:

Any other questions?

Bob:

Yeah. John, I've always heard you saying, "Oh, yeah, I went and pulled this out of the vault." And that's why last month I said I would love to gather more information about this. And you're very privileged to have access to it, and you enjoy it also. That's the other thing.

John:

[inaudible 00:18:42] find all sorts of cool things.

Mark:

But it's never locked?

John:

No, it's never locked. It's closed. And when the door closes it takes some effort. And it locks, it doesn't lock, lock.

Naomi:

It latches.

John:

It latches, right so that the fire suppression would be contained within the vault itself. You cannot lock the vault anymore.

Mark:

Well, how about if somebody wanted to go in there and steal some of our old records?

John:

First, they'd have to get in the building, and then somebody could walk in there. Yes. I don't think anybody really knows that it's there for the most part. The people who are aware of it are, and I let some people go, and Chris Maloon in particular. He does a lot of work with pipe sheets, pipe records and then has to look up some of our deeds for plotting easements on our GIS. So, he goes in there, and he's very meticulous about it, just like he is meticulous about the pipe sheets, which he has more control of.

Mark:

John?

Greg:

Do you have cameras up there?

Mark:

I mean, do we have a camera or something if somebody goes in there?

John:

No.

Mark:

Some of those records, not only would save their deeds and stuff, right? But the deeds are all probably recorded in each town, I would imagine.



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John:

Yeah, there's nothing really of value in there. It's historical records, and everything's filed on the land records that needs to be filed. So, we have titles, everything that we need. Should it all go up? We're still in fine shape because it's all recorded on land records.

Mark:

But you'll probably have copies of everything too, right? In another place?

John:

Yeah. And plus, like I said, we've also scanned everything, so everything has a PDF that's on the computer system.

Mark:

Cool. Okay.

Jamie:

Can I ask a question?

Mark:

Sure, go ahead.

Jamie:

What is the system that you use? Is it just an Excel spreadsheet? Is it a database?

John:

Yeah, it's a database that works off of, I think the company's called Square 9. It's a database, and when they created it they made a little... [inaudible 00:21:11], that would, I don't have to look at it like a spreadsheet. I look at it where I can see all the fields. And then there's one big field for comments that you can...

Jamie:

Free form.

John:

You could be as verbose as you want in it, or you could have nothing in it at all. So, that is really helpful to me. When I put in all the BUI stuff, I put something in there that would help me or anyone else future looking for something, gives some more definition. In a lot of the older records, especially like this kind of stuff, then the comment section's blank. So, you would have to get your search engine keywords off of the other fields. But in the comment's thing, now you can really be as creative as you want, put in as many clues, pieces of information that would help the searcher in the future in that field.

Jamie:

And is it a standalone system? Or is it integrated with any of the other systems?

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John:

No, I think it's pretty standalone. And I think there are other databases that are similar that are used by other departments, but this is something different.

Jamie:

And I'm assuming it's not in the cloud. So, what's the backup protocol for that [inaudible 00:22:27]?

John:

I mean, whatever ISD does for our whole system.

Jamie:

[inaudible 00:22:31]

John:

Oh, absolutely. I think so.

Sunny:

The question. You may have already have the backup because we do back most of the data up in some kind of plot.

Jamie:

A lot of the little systems I find, even around the state, people forgot about. [inaudible 00:22:45]

Sunny:

I think that's a fair point.

Jamie:

[inaudible 00:22:50] It's a lot of work you put into it. It's really cool. How many people have access to it? Who uses it?

John:

Well, we can give access to the, you mean the database?

Jamie:

Yeah.

John:

I can give the link to anybody who's on the system, and they can go in there. Once in a while there's somebody who's new comes up and asks about it, and I say, "Here's how you can get in there." But really the number of people who use it, you count on one hand, and you'll have fingers left over.

Jamie:

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Really [inaudible 00:23:22].

Mike:

It is. You can get all four of them left [inaudible 00:23:27].

John:

I know it's Amy and Chris Maloon. Anyway, but not too many beyond them.

Mark:

Jamie, you want to go in and check it out? You there?

Jamie:

Right now?

Mark:

No, I mean, unless you're there.

Jamie:

So, I like things like that, so yeah, but you don't need to take [inaudible 00:23:50]. Yeah, yeah, I'd love to go see it.

Mark:

Are you in the building?

Jamie:

Me? Yeah.

Mark:

Oh, John, you in the building?

John:

I'm here.

Mark:

Give her a tour if she wants. I don't know.

John:

[inaudible 00:24:05]

Mark:

I don't think she's allowed access.

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Brian:

John. Question.

Mark:

But anyway...

Brian:

[inaudible 00:24:09]

John:

Go ahead, Brian.

Brian:

How did you come up with that crazy filing system letter classifications?

Naomi:

It wasn't you.

John:

It's not me. It dates at least I would say 80 years ago.

Jamie:

Probably before the US Congress of whatever the library was even developed, right?

John:

I mean, clearly you could see that, I mean, these are more modern envelopes, but we do have some in there that were definitely in whatever vault they use, whatever archive they used at Crown Street that... So, the 1920s, was there a vault, an archive? Yes. And didn't have this lettering system? Yes, because there are labels on them that are that old, I would estimate to be 100-years-old. So, not my fault, I just work with it.

Mark:

Do you think [inaudible 00:25:08]

Brian:

I couldn't make any sense of it.

John:

Yeah.

Mark:

Go ahead. You go ahead. I'm sorry.

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John:

Go ahead, Mark.

Mark:

Oh, did he answer your question, Brian? I'm sorry.

Brian:

Yeah, he doesn't know where it came from.

Mark:

Do you think any of-

John:

It came from my predecessors. That's my answer.

Mark:

Do you think any of these signatures are worth any serious kind of money? I mean, is there anybody is famous in there that's the signatures in there?

John:

No.

Jamie:

The Beinecke library is one of the Yale libraries that holds some of the most... Very sought after, they're old, old, old, old documents. Somethings even on papyrus. It's old stuff. And people would go in there. You were talking about the lock and people doing research. Research students were in there. And at some point, they realized that somebody had gone in and actually cut out the George Washington's signature on several documents. There were Native American signatures that had been removed. Yeah, and they ended up finding out who it was, and how they found it was somebody went on, I don't know if it was eBay, but on something they were trying to sell the signature. Do you remember this?

Mike:

In the papers was like 15 years ago?

Jamie:

Yeah. So, maybe you can elaborate. I don't remember all the details.

Mike:

[inaudible 00:27:03].

Mark:

Put it on the maps. [inaudible 00:27:03]

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Jamie:

On maps, yeah. And so, they got them back, but the documents of course were damaged. But it happens. And they have police, and they have security and they have cameras, and it still happened. If somebody's going to do something, they're going to find a way, but I don't know who Israel whatever was, but I think we're probably safe. Yeah.

Mark:

It might be [inaudible 00:27:25] could have been a good Jew from Israel. Israel wasn't around then, Palestine. Or he could have been from Puerto Rico. Either or.

Jamie:

Did you say Puerto Rico?

Mark:

Yeah. Israel's a Jewish name, and Israel's a Spanish name. Just wanted to bring you up to date. Anyway, I think that won't happen at Yale ever again. They must have taken some big security now for that. But anyways, anybody have any more questions for John?

Jamie:

This was excellent, thank you.

Mark:

Excellent, John. Thank you. Excellent. I've been on this board a long time. I never knew about the vault. That was great. Okay, so the next thing on the agenda is review. FY 2026 budget schedule from Sunny. Congratulations on your interim appointment.

Sunny:

Thank you. Thank you.

Greg:

Congratulations [inaudible 00:28:37].

Sunny:

Thank you. You want to pull up the calendar?

Jamie:

Yes.

Sunny:

And John made the past very interesting. I'm not so sure whether the future is that interesting.

Brian:

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This paper's going to go in the vault.

Greg:

Better put your signature on it.

Mark:

Here we go.

Sunny:

This is for the joint meeting. So, we'll have the joint meeting with Consumer Affairs. For Consumer Affairs I will confirm the dates [inaudible 00:29:13]. Finance Committee meeting on 4/7.

Jennifer:

Yes, they're going to have their review on April 7th.

Sunny:

The dates that we have is preferred dates. Is April 15, April 17th and April 18th. April 18th is a Friday. So, the preferred dates would be 15th and 17th. So, there is a list of holidays at the bottom, Jennifer, you want to scroll down a little bit, so you know when the holidays are for April?

Jennifer:

Just Tax Day that week, and then the 14th is a Jewish holiday, but I didn't put that on there.

Mark:

The 14th is Passover?

Jennifer:

Yes.

Greg:

That's I was just going to ask.

Mark:

So, is it a joint meeting that'll occur on our meeting date or on Consumer Affairs meeting date or a separate meeting date?

Sunny:

I think it's a joint meeting. Typically, I think it's what we did last time too.

Mark:

Yeah, I know. So, is it going to land on one of our meeting dates or is it going to land... No, it's a separate meeting that both of us [inaudible 00:30:23].

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Sunny:

It's a separate one. Tuesday, then Thursday, the 15th and 17th. Wednesday is typically our meetings Tuesday, so it would be a separate meeting.

Jennifer:

Wednesday is EXCOM meeting.

Sunny:

Wednesday's the EXCOM meeting?

Jennifer:

Yeah. So, it would be a special meeting of Land Use and Consumer Affairs.

Mark:

On which date? On 16th or...

Sunny:

16th, I think Jennifer is saying to EXCOM.

Jennifer:

Yed.

Mark:

17th?

Sunny:

So, we have 17th, which is Thursday, and we have Tuesday that is [inaudible 00:30:56].

Mark:

Tuesday. I mean, I can't. Tuesday's my auction night. So, I mean, [inaudible 00:30:59]. So, I can do 17th if everybody... Is that okay with everybody?

Okay, so let's plan on the 17th. Sunny, is that okay with you?

Sunny:

Yes. Thanks. Will be a good first meeting.

Jennifer:

That's good. I'll just confirm with Consumer Affairs on Monday, and then we'll be all set.

Jamie:

Hold on. Isn't the Finance meeting also on the 17th?



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Jennifer:

I think it's going to be the 7th, the regular meeting date. I met with Rochelle today. I'm just confirming with Vin, but I think it is going to be the regular meeting date on the 7th. I'll be sending out an email once I hear from him.

Mark:

Okay.

Jamie:

It's listed April 14th to April 18th, will likely be April 7th. [inaudible 00:31:55]

Sunny:

Correct. [inaudible 00:31:53]

Mark:

Right. You can go [inaudible 00:32:03]. Okay, and next on the agenda is... [inaudible 00:32:09] printed it out too. You've got the agenda? What's the next thing? Okay, so we did the physical, updates on the land and RWA problems including invasive species update.

Sunny:

All right, are we good to go?

Mark:

Good to go.

John:

All right. Reservoir levels at the end of November, we were at 69%. Last year we were at 86 showing how the dry this fall was. The long-term average is 66. We started to finally get some rain in November, and it has continued until December. We're still keeping an eye on things because we're not out of the woods yet. We expect that the percent storage would continue to climb throughout the winter.

Today was a good example of getting a good soaker, and that should help us continue to climb. Rainfall for the month of November was 2.96 inches. Last year was 3.52. Long-term average is just under four. For the fiscal year the rainfall is 20 and a half inches, and the long-term average is just over 23.

For land we need for the [inaudible 00:33:36] program corresponding with the property on the 24 acres in Madison, the Bis/Bowman property in Cheshire, started marking the new boundaries there. Contract, so we were contacted by two abutters, one in Prospect, one in Gilbert, about acquiring our land. And I explained that our land was protected not for sale.

On the Ricci property, which is owned by the town of Cheshire, but we have an easement over, we corresponded with a consultant about the management plan for the property that's supposed to be authored by the town. The authority holds a consideration to easement over this parcel of the Mill River, runs right through the middle of it.

For Seymour, 56 Squantuck Road, we composed a memo answering questions from the FMA about the application. The LUC determined the application was complete, as you guys in Letters and Applications were sent to required groups by Jennifer and me.

The North Branford, Beech Street and Poms Lane properties corresponded with the [inaudible 00:34:29] staff about the boundaries and the gates and talked to Dave Sargent, who is the president there. And we're starting to mark the new boundaries next week.

Rental houses 233 Skiff Street in Hamden, The P & Z application was tabled, and we submitted application for variances as directed by the zoning staff into town. At 1029 Johnson Road in Woodbridge, we talked to the prospective buyer of the property in the email and more answers of questions he had about the deed restrictions.

The only thing that's changed for the forestry update is what's in bold at the bottom, some advancement on the limited high grade rehabilitation cut. In the last month, AC and Josh corresponded with DEEP staff about installing water level sensors at the Big Gulf tunnel that's in relation to the LSR grant that we have.

Worked on a plan for the new slash wall timber harvest at Lake Saltonstall. The repair of the gate at the Seymour slash wall harvest. Marked timber for existing wood cutters and moved some wood cutters to new locations. That's pretty standard. Worked with natural resources specialists to order the planting stock for next year. Researched the bio-controlled beetles for hemlock woolly adelgid infestations.

And met with the maple tapper at Lake Gaillard to coordinate removal and remounting of the tubing, and working with another contractor, one our normal guys for removing invasive plants. That's mostly Japanese barberry. That's all over Sea Hill [inaudible 00:36:05] in that location.

Talking to Bob about this earlier, organized a site inspection at Prospect Reservoir for vendor to supply a quote for mowing the lake bottom. Casey knew the person or knew the vendor who would have the right equipment. That's why he was involved.

For recreation, the New Haven Bird Club walk occurred at Lake Dawson. I did not hear about how many people attended that. Fishing season ended at the end of November. We discussed the importance of the causeway with engineering staff here at Lake Chamberlain for people to walk around the lake.

Nicole went out and cleared various trails at Lake Chamberlain where we had trees reported down. Bethany horseman also were out in the Lake Chamberlain area working on horse trails in this fault, after the fall leaves came down. The newsletter was published and mailed out, and we updated the recreation pamphlet, was all finalized for our printer.

So, at the end of November we had 4,838 permittees compared to 4,730 last year. So, we're doing very well, and it was a slight decrease over what we had at the end of October. Lyndon issued six special activity permits, including four to one of our former police officers, Celeste, who runs a dog search team. We've allowed her to use our property in various locations and that's worked out well.

Other items, encroachments and agreements at Hamden Hall. We signed the amendment to the agreement there, so we're all set. West Haven and Shingle Hill Tanks, we received the payment from EL and got a copy of their insurance, and all parties were working to relocate the condo run from West Haven's building up to the tank.

At Clinton Road and Seymour, I correspond to a vendor for the town. He uses the building for a radio repeater. I indicated that they are responsible for any maintenance and that the town's agreement needs to be renewed by this January if they wanted to keep their equipment in the building. That was

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similar to what we saw also at the Seymour [inaudible 00:38:05] while we were out there. Same kind of deal.

Invasive plants, Josh treated and documented invasive plant populations in Branford, Prospect, Seymour and North Branford. They had a contractor clear two acres of water [inaudible 00:38:17] at a newly acquired property off of Cherry Hill Road. That's in Branford. So, documented five and three quarters acres and treated the two acres in Branford.

The deer hunch was completed in November and had a total of 40 deer harvested. The breakdown by gender and location is shown in the table. So, we had a total of 29 came out of Gaillard. Two came from Prospect, two from Bethany, eight from Prospect and one from Seymour Ansonia site. On total is pretty evenly split this year between those and bucks. That's unusual.

Mark:

How are the hunters, are they happy about those kind of totals? Or do they think that there's not enough there to waste their time anymore, or was that good?

John:

We're still getting positive feedback. We still do a survey. The surveys aren't due back to Nicole until January, so I'm sure she'll be hearing from them. We always take comments from our deer hunters. We've done that since the beginning in 2009.

Mark:

Well, I was thinking maybe, Sunny, we should have a report from who's the head of that? Who runs that?

John:

Nicole?

Sunny:

Nicole.

Mark:

Yeah. Do you think we should get a report at our next meeting? That would be January, right?

John:

Yes. I'll talk to her about coming to January.

Mark:

It's always a good report. Okay, thank you.

John:

Can do. Boundaries. We checked the remarked boundaries at Hamden and Cheshire. Beech Street, I'm sorry, Beech Avenue. In each table, the consultant got the signed permission from the town that we needed, and in order to submit the application in DEEP, and notice was put into the newspaper.

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In Guilford, the Rockland Road gate, this is Rockland Road becomes County Road in Madison, the correspondent with the abutter above the lock on the gate. We didn't have the key, so we made sure he was able to pass and repass, as he's allowed to do. Hamden at Main Street, we applied to a surveying firm about old maps that we have from the former New Haven Water Company property there around Lake Wintergreen.

I talked to Chris Maloon about water main easement encroachments, and I reviewed the spreadsheet that he's created with that. So, we'll get working on that do more of it as we head into 2025.

St. James Street easement for New Haven, I contacted Yale staff again in order to get the easement for a portion of the street that was discontinued, as now owned completely by the university. The attorney there was still checking with other people on Yale's staff.

And the flood alert and raw water matters, Nicole renewed all the FCC licenses for all our flood warning system sites that comes up for renewal every 10 years. The Lake Whitney Dam project, Nicole also went out and conducted a tree inventory inside the park where we will need access to the dam. We have basically committed to the city that we will replace the trees that we have to get out of the way in order to access the eastern side of the dam.

In land use plan, we worked on a second draft of maps for the next land use plan update. We'll get more working on that in depth once we get into 2025. North Branford, the UI water main easement of course-

Mark:

Excuse me, John, what do you think? Do we have to vote on that plan?

John:

Yes, but that won't come before you until late 2025 or early 2026.

Mark:

Okay. I thought we had voted on it. Who votes on it first? The five-member authority and then us, or it just comes to us?

John:

Right. The management would update it and prepare it, give it to the five members, and then we will bring it to the full RPB for approval. You guys approve it.

Mark:

Okay. Okay, just checking. Thanks, John. It will come to the land use committee too first before it goes to the RPB or no?

John:

Yes. Yes.

Mark:

Thank you.

John:

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UI water main easement in North Branford will correspond with the town staff about getting easement through their property. So, this involves three properties, two owned by UI. It's the old trolley line south of where the water treatment plan is. And then the third property, the farthest to the east is town owned. So, I sent a draft easement template to the town manager, and he was going to share it with the attorney and get back to me. I haven't heard back from him yet.

[inaudible 00:42:47] North Branford, we filed planning zoning permits that we received for the new tank at West Pond Road and also for the Lake Gaillard pavilion.

Drone flights in the month of November, Josh conducted a drone flight at Farm River North Branford diversion to document the sediment buildup that will be dredged in the future. He also did drone flights at various water tanks for engineering, inspected all the hatches on top of the tanks to determine if people needed to take closer looks at [inaudible 00:43:17].

Foresters, myself and many other people, about 90 people attended the Northeast Mid-Atlantic Partnership Foresting Watershed and Water Conference hosted by us at the Lake Whitney Water Streamer plant. Josh Tracy helped coordinate the conference, and both Casey and Josh spoke at the conference, as did Steve Vitko.

There are four articles we bring you to read this month, and I am hoping for any questions you might have on this month's summary.

Mark:

I think that, first of all, are we, our land use person or forester or Josh, are we the drone people now? In other words, if engineering needed a drone to look at a tank or they needed to go in, he's the guy to go to now for the whole company, right?

John:

That's correct, yes.

Mark:

Okay, that's great. And this forester thing that you had at Whitney sounded great. That was a super program. I saw it on Lincoln. Lincoln? Lincoln? Lincoln.

John:

Lincoln, yeah.

Mark:

Lincoln.

John:

It was very well attended. There were people from Maine to West Virginia and Maryland, so had a good geographical representation.

Mark:

We're leaders in this department, so to speak, this thing. We're the leaders in the country, I think, or at least New England. Anyways, great job, John. Great report.

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John:

Thank you.

Mark:

Anybody have any questions?

Greg:

John, I want to ask you, [inaudible 00:44:48] Farm Road, new tank, is that replacing an existing tank?

John:

No, it's going to be adding to the existing one while we work on the existing one. So, to maintain enough water in the system, and I don't know if Jim or Sunny-

Sunny:

Too expensive to maintain this. We will actually remove it. So, the way that we are envisioning right now is one plus one. So, we will put the new one in, and then we'll see how it goes. But for redundancy and resiliency, we may need another one. But the consultant is working on a few options. So, it could be 2 million gallons plus another one, or maybe two, one and a half, depending on, I would say, which [inaudible 00:45:36].

Jamie:

For a future topic, I don't know how much work this entails, so if it's over the top. Would the RFP benefit from learning how the Birmingham sale happened, or acquisition happened and all the transition that was required? Would that be helpful as we contemplate [inaudible 00:46:04]? Or do you think it's just apples and oranges?

John:

It may be helpful.

Jamie:

To look at what happened.

John:

I'm not sure who would be the best person to talk about that.

Mark:

Yeah, I don't think it's apples to apples. Maybe Bob could elaborate on it. Do you think that's apples to apples, the Birmingham and the Aquarion?

Bob:

I think it's going to be much more intense.

Mark:

Yeah, really.

Jamie:

I just wonder if there was...

Bob:

Birmingham was... Not going to say it was fairly simple, but the system was there. We've already been selling them raw water. So, we had already known how and what was needed from the RWA to still make it work. This next one, I don't know. And Birmingham was in financial distress, so yeah, there was some... It needed to be.

Jamie:

Maybe we could talk about an executive session. What do you think? I mean, EXCON meeting? I don't know. Or have somebody from the management let us know whether you think, I don't know. I don't know if you could talk about it that much. You have to be in executive session. Yeah, Birmingham was so simple. Bam, bam, bam. Right, Bob?

Bob:

No, I wouldn't say there were some... Properties were problems, properties that they owned that we didn't need. So, there was sales of some properties [inaudible 00:47:44] out in Guilford or something.

John:

There was an office in Guilford that had a guy who was living in an unregistered apartment.

Bob:

Yeah, yeah.

John:

It was a commercial building that they had an elderly gentleman living in an apartment within the commercial building. So, just to give you more background on this, is that he was a World War II veteran, although he had a dog. And now we bought this thing, and we didn't want it. But when we sold it, he was going to have to be evicted.

So, we had at that point kicked all the people out of the former rental houses. Remember? About five years earlier. Now, the rental houses had been empty for five years. And the people who were here, like I guess it was David Silverstone, and Ginny [inaudible 00:48:35] was very involved in it. His name was Al, "What are we going to do with Al?"

Bob:

Yeah.

John:

So, what they did is they looked around and said, okay, "Which house would it take less money and effort to rehabilitate and make livable for Al?"

And we decided that it was the one in Madison on Summer Hill Road. It was a small, little, fishing bungalow and we fixed it up enough so that Al lived his final days there. He had no family who took care of him. The people who took care of him was Ginny and Chris Roach, unfortunately. And when he passed, they went in there and they took care of all of his affairs, all of his possessions because nobody came for him.

Bob:

That's sad.

John:

Yeah.

Mark:

Very sad. But Birmingham is like... I'm trying to say a Corvair or something to... Aquarion was like a Rolls-Royce, that's so much different. Or a three-family house to a 1,000-unit complex. It's a different complex. But I mean, that's something-

Jamie:

I guess I was looking at it to think if there was a post-mortem done about things that if in the next acquisition we should think about boom, boom, boom, or this didn't work or just, it might be helpful just to think about some things that maybe they could have done differently. I don't know if you guys do postmortems.

Mark:

There was something to the effect that some people on the board did express that they thought they paid too much for it. And it turned out just like everything else, we did pay too much for it. But I mean, certain people's opinions. But anyways, why don't we bring, Sunny, can we talk to somebody? What do you think about that?

Jamie:

I think it's not helpful. It's not helpful. This is the last thing you need to do. You guys have a lot on your plate, so don't go through a big rigmarole if it's not already something that's been done. You guys have a lot to do. So, it was just, if there was a post-mortem document that's a good reference tool, I just wanted to highlight it. I think about as you're thinking through just to, somebody [inaudible 00:50:49] out of nature, any of those hiccups, maybe.

Mark:

I don't think there's a postmortem document for sure. I mean, Silverstone might know, right?

Sunny:

Hey, Mark, I think one of the few people who was still left over from that acquisition, because I think Larry was involved at that time.

John:



No, Larry was not here. [inaudible 00:51:11]

Sunny:

Maybe Silverstone is the person, but there is one difference between that one and the Bluedrop. The reason is because the integration is going to be more the way that originally it was presented, more at the top level because both of them are going to operate-

Greg:

They're still going to be separate-

Sunny:

Separate entities, right? So, they're all individual silos. So, Birmingham, in my opinion, I think from what I can understand, in the recent past was more integrated into Regional Water Authority, and it became the authorities. So, the AWA is going to remain as a separate entity. And RWA will remain as a separate entity.

So, with its own financials, with its own set of financials, whatever. Not only the operational side of it, but the financial end of it too will, stand-alone entities. But going back to your question, Jamie, is there lessons learned? Maybe there was, right? Certainly, I think there is something for us to look into. I don't have anything at this time that is more documented in a formal fashion, but certainly we can look into any details that it's probably in the vault.

Jamie:

[inaudible 00:52:22] I don't want to add any work with everything that's going on with this and with the transition. There's enough on everybody's plate.

Mark:

But Jamie did bring up a good point, and maybe you should contact Silverstone to find out if he had to do it over, what would he do? And what should we do for this? He is a pretty smart guy, Silverstone. Just a thought. Okay. Are we all set?

Greg:

Speaking of Birmingham, are there any employees that we acquired with the Birmingham merger? Are they still with us? Do you know?

Greg:

They're all gone.

Mark:

They didn't have that many employees, did they?

John:

Yeah. I mean, several of them came over, and then they retired.

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Mark:

Yeah.

John:

Joe Balduro is an example as well.

Greg:

They had no young blood in there.

John:

I wouldn't say that, but the people who came over, they were more senior people. They had more years under them already.

Greg:

How about Aquarion? [inaudible 00:53:39] Aquarion?

Sunny:

We are not in executive session, so I would rather not say anything.

Mark:

Okay. Anything else guys? Or do you want to dwell on this, or should we move on? Okay. Any other land items, John? That's about it? It was great report, John. Especially the vault, and I love that thing about the species, the seminar that we held in Lake Whitney, that was such a great idea. Thank you for doing that, putting that together. Everybody in that department. We're a leader in that field now, and I really think that, and it's all the pushing that we've done as a committee to bring this about.

Anyways, the authority meeting assignments are December 19th is Greg Malloy. Any problems?

Greg:

Nope.

Mark:

Okay. January 23rd is Peter Betkoski. Any problems?

Peter:

No.

Mark:

Just want to make sure you're still there, Peter.

Peter:

I'm listening.

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Mark:

Next regular meeting, it's Wednesday, January 8th. Boy, I can't believe it's January 2025. Wow. 5:30PM.  
Can I entertain a motion to adjourn if there's anything else that anybody wants to bring up? Unless anything else?

Greg:

So moved.

Mark:

Second?

Brian:

Second.

Mark:

All those in favor?

Committee members:

Aye.