

The New Haven Register (nhregister.com), Serving New Haven, CT

Opinion

LETTER: Griswold site may be town's next 'jewel'

Friday, October 23, 2009

A letter was published Oct.14 suggesting that the Griswold property could be reopened as an airport. This possibility was investigated at some length. I attended a meeting at the state Department of Transportation in spring 2009 to determine if, in fact, funding could be available to purchase and re-open the airport.

First of all, at that time, the land was not being offered for sale. The license to operate as an airport had expired. The reissuance of a license was not likely due to the runway length being considerably short of the minimum 2,200 feet.

The DOT can only negotiate with the owner, which must be a municipality. Any federal and state funds would only be available if the runway was lengthened to at least 2,200 feet, unless "grandfathered in." The taking of land in the adjacent salt marsh for runway extension was neither viable nor environmentally prudent.

Since no municipality was involved, no preliminary discussions of a serious nature could begin. The consensus of the meeting was that it was most unlikely that the airport could ever be re-opened as such.

The present proposal for conservation of pristine salt marsh, some lovely shore-side woodlands, and active recreation on the northern side of the property is what is being presented to the voters.

I thank the Trust for Public Land for their role in helping to acquire this property. Although the cost is considerable, the purchase will yield long-term benefits in making our town a more desirable place to live.

Many years ago, the purchase of the Surf Club property was contentious and thought to be too expensive. Now we can't imagine the town without it and hopefully this purchase will add another "jewel" to our shoreline.

Ralph Dykstra

Madison

URL: <http://www.nhregister.com/articles/2009/10/23/opinion/doc4ae12d6cd3694276908318.prt>

© 2009 nhregister.com, a **Journal Register** Property