

HB1196 – Sec 14

My name is Clark Gardner and I live on 37 Maple Ave, Higganum, CT. I am opposed to the proposed land swap by Steven Rocco. I was present at a Planning and Zoning meeting at least 18 months ago, Mr. Rocco was extremely evasive and outright stealth like when pressed about the state and federal groups he was attempting to not name in his proposal to the P and Z ; his words exactly were " unnamed entities" and at one point looked at Mr. Ed Swing (editor of Haddam Bulletin) and said " I don't suppose it would be too much to ask to have the bulletin refrain in printing anything about this proposal , would it? " I also firmly believe it is not in the best interests of the state of Connecticut residents to have state open land on the banks of the Connecticut river, to be exact it is not on the banks but rather several yards from it , I don't know the exact distance , nonetheless it is 17 acres of very scenic land under the auspices of the DEP and swap this for 84 acres of forest bordered by High St. and Route 154 in Higganum center. The 17 acres in question have a high commercial potential and Mr. Rocco is a part owner in the adjacent Riverhouse, a commercial event center available for rental. There is a rumor that the Goodspeed opera house is hoping to build a hotel there and the site is to be fully developed commercially. What alarms me and is of concern is the manner and tone Mr. Rocco has carried out his plan for this land swap in 2009 it was , I am not exaggerating, a last minute addition as an amendment to a bill at several minutes before midnight at the last day to accomplish this of that legislative year. To the best of my knowledge he has had the full cooperation of Ms. Eileen Daily and if not for the efforts of then Congressman James Spallone it might have gone through without any public input what so ever. In 2010 the bill did not move forward as well and Steven Rocco is attempting to do a similar push, under the radar. I only heard about this yesterday the 17th of March. Again I fully oppose such a consideration without a well-informed public meeting in all the towns that have a vested interest in the outcome of such a land swap. After all, it is the public's land (17 acres) and for it to be switched for a somewhat remote 84 acre parcel without adequate citizen involvement does not seem like a transparent effort involving the parties and the tax-paying citizens of the State of Connecticut. Please feel free to contact me with any concerns, Clark Gardner (860) 345-4769