

## Hinsch, Paul

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**To:** Margaret Miner  
**Cc:** Pyles, Pia; Aresta, Paul; alicea  
**Subject:** RE: Woodridge land transfer

Good morning Ms. Miner –

Thank you for the comments regarding the subject property in Woodbridge.

We certainly agree that a consistent and transparent approach is helpful to all involved. That said, we are often limited on data with certain properties, as in this case. The subject property was transferred to the state's Department of Income Maintenance, now known as the Department of Social Services, in 1983 for assistance and any information was extremely limited. Additionally, a non-conforming property such as this, typically does not lend itself to in-depth due diligence, as the value is extremely low.

We also believe that to achieve an unbiased approach, assumptions regarding future use or possible assemblages or access to adjoining properties can cause any review to no longer be an unbiased one but rather steered towards a certain direction. With that said, we do review to determine all possible uses in order to determine its potential value. As with many non-conforming parcels, any end use is usually only beneficial to an abutting property owner.

As with all property transfer notifications, we certainly encourage interested parties to perform their own due diligence to determine next steps.

I would also note the following standard practices regarding the state surplus property:

- 1) when agencies list a property in the Environmental Monitor, they usually do not have a buyer at that time and thus, no intended use would be known.
- 2) we do not, for the majority of the transfers, establish any conditions, including an end use, on a transfer. In doing so would trigger the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act and would most likely reduce the property's market value.
- 3) when a property is declared to be surplus to state needs, all agencies have had an opportunity to investigate the property and once it reaches the level of transfer, it has been determined that no agency desires to obtain custody and control of it.
- 4) the next step, after no state agency is interested, is to notify the municipality to see if they are interested in purchasing it. Should they desire to acquire it, they can certainly implement restrictive covenants.
- 5) once a property is advertised for sale, it means that no state agency or the municipality is interested in the property and the property is available to all, including not-for-profits, land trusts, developers, private individuals or users, etc.
- 6) as mentioned above, an end use for a property is usually not known when the transfer notifications are submitted and often times the end use is not known even after the sale;
- 7) Local zoning laws, building codes and health department codes are in place to ensure a proper end use is achieved.

Any transfers via a legislative conveyance bill are not subject to any of our surplus processes although we do have an opportunity to weigh-in on any proposed bill and have specific required reverter language to protect the state's interest.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Thank you and take care,

Paul

Paul F. Hinsch  
Office of Policy and Management  
Bureau of Assets Management  
450 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106-1379  
860-418-6429 (Voice)  
[paul.hinsch@ct.gov](mailto:paul.hinsch@ct.gov)

**From:** Margaret Miner <[margaret.miner@charter.net](mailto:margaret.miner@charter.net)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 25, 2023 3:07 AM  
**To:** Hinsch, Paul <[Paul.Hinsch@ct.gov](mailto:Paul.Hinsch@ct.gov)>  
**Cc:** Pyles, Pia <[Pia.Pyles@ct.gov](mailto:Pia.Pyles@ct.gov)>; Aresta, Paul <[Paul.Aresta@ct.gov](mailto:Paul.Aresta@ct.gov)>; alicea <[alicea@riversalliance.org](mailto:alicea@riversalliance.org)>  
**Subject:** FW: Woodridge land transfer

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FOR: Paul Hinsch, Office of Policy and Management

RE: Scoping Notice 7 Forest Road Woodridge CT

DATE: January 25, 2023

FROM: Margaret Miner, Environmental Consultant

I write to request that additional relevant information be added to the Scoping Notice in the current Environmental Monitor for the sale of 0.12 acres in Woodridge to Cameron Castle, Dir. Assembly Pro.

This is the fourth state agency land conveyance posted in the Monitor in recent months. As background, for a number of years, I and other environmental advocates have been working toward the goal that, in state land conveyances, whether done in the legislature or elsewhere, there is a normal standard with respect to making the transaction transparent. We look for timely notice with a full and consistent description of the property and its intended use.

This Woodridge conveyance is tiny. But from time to time a small, almost miniscule conveyance can have major consequences, opening a much larger area for new uses. Access to other areas or new uses can depend upon a small change in property rights. Therefore, even when it seems silly, we look for approximately the same information for small conveyances as large ones.

Here is a request for additional information that would help the public to understand the Woodridge proposal.

A little more detail on the current character and use of the piece.

From the notice we know that it is not wooded and not paved. (Is it a rock outcrop or turf or what?)

We know that it has no waters. Whether there is a water supply for septic arrangement is not known.

With respect to water supply, we ask that, for all conveyances, the state add a check box on whether the property is in the recharge area of a public drinking water source. The GAE Committee now includes this question on the request forms for conveyances. A "don't know" answer is more helpful than no information at all.

Current use and proposed use should be stated. What is the purpose of the conveyance? Is it of value in itself (for example, is it needed to extend a septic leaching field)? Or is it sought for an indirect benefit (for example, to extend frontage to transform a nonconforming lot to a conforming one).

Who has been notified of the conveyance? Neighbors? A homeowners or condominium association? A town official?

Some brief information on the recipient of the property is relevant. If it is a nonprofit, for example, is the mission to provide affordable housing or a school or other service? . If it is a business, is it a restaurant, retail, or what? If it is an individual, is it for example, is it an abutting property owner intending residential use? In this case, it is not clear if the conveyance is to Cameron Carroll for residential use or for his business.

In my view, it is always important to put some restriction on use and to consider an optional reverter clause (even if you don't want the property back). Property owners can be very creative in coming up with projects one could not readily imagine. The state should not be blamed for an unwelcome use of the conveyance that is very different from what it expected.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Margaret Miner, Litchfield 203-788-5161

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