

WASHINGTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MINUTES October 6, 2021

5:15 P.M.

Meeting Held Via Zoom Conference

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Payne, Mr. Gewanter, Mr. Conroy, Ms. Frank, Ms. Rawson
ALTERNATES ABSENT: Mr. Macdonald
Others: Ms. Branson, Mr. Charles, Ms. Stagen
CLERK: Mr. Buell

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:16 p.m.

Approval of Minutes of Sept. 1, 2021

Ms. Payne stated that the Commission had been sent a copy of the September 1, 2021 meeting minutes, and asked if there were any comments or questions. Ms. Rawson stated that she would abstain from this vote as she did not attend the meeting. Following this comment, a motion was passed to accept these minutes.

Motion: To accept the September 1, 2021 Meeting Minutes as written by
Mr. Gewanter, Seconded by Ms. Payne. Passed unanimously.

Following this, Ms. Payne introduced Ms. Stagen to the Commission as a member of the community who had become interesting in joining the Conservation Commission, and introduced members of the Commission to Ms. Stagen.

LID/Low Impact Development & Tree Regs.

Ms. Payne introduced Ms. Branson to the Commission as a current member of the Inland Wetlands Commission, and stated that Ms. Branson had drafted a tree regulation proposal for the Zoning Commission when she had been a member of the Conservation Commission. She then stated that Ms. Branson had revised this proposal recently, and that these revisions had been sent to the Conservation Commission to review. Following this, Ms. Branson provided the Commission with a short description of how this document had come to exist, and indicated that the Inland Wetlands Commission had recently requested that this document be "tightened up." Following her summary of how this document was initially drafted, and how the Inland Wetlands Commission had become involved in the project, she stated that she hoped that the Conservation Commission would review and approve this document so that it may be moved to the Inland Wetlands Commission for their official review. She went on to state that the Inland Wetlands Commission had requested that an official letter be drafted and sent from the

Conservation Commission, to the Zoning Commission, requesting that the Zoning Commission consider revisions to the Zoning regulations. Ms. Branson indicated that following an official request that the Zoning Commission review these proposed tree regulations, the Zoning Commission will need to conduct a special meeting to consider these regulations. She then stated that she was pleased that the Inland Wetlands Commission had agreed to work with the Conservation Commission to help move these proposed revisions to the Zoning Commission.

Mr. Conroy asked for clarification on which document was the most recent, and following this, Ms. Branson further explained the proposed changes and asked if the Commission had any questions or comments on the proposal.

Ms. Payne asked if the Commission had been able to review this proposed regulation, and if the Commission felt comfortable voting on this document without further consideration.

Ms. Rawson thanked Ms. Branson for her work on this, and stated that she felt no major changes had been made to the substance of this document after reading the revisions which had been made by Ms. Branson. Ms. Branson stated that a large focus of her proposed regulation was to protect ridgelines, and following this, Ms. Rawson provided both the Commission, and Ms. Branson with three suggested alterations to the document.

Two of these suggestions were purely grammatical, and the third indicated that the document did not clearly state a definition of ridgelines. Ms. Rawson stated that this section should be revised so that it's wording would not be open to interpretation. Ms. Branson thanked Ms. Rawson for these recommendations, and agreed that the wording for this section of the document was too ambiguous. With no further comments or questions, the Commission passed a motion to accept these revisions so they may be moved to the Inland Wetlands Commission for further review.

Motion: To accept the revisions as presented and amended with Ms. Rawson's thoughtfulness by Ms. Payne. Seconded by Mr. Gewanter. Passed Unanimously.

Recommendations for Vacancy

Ms. Payne stated that she had invited Ms. Stagen to meet the Commission, and asked if the Commission had any questions for this potential alternate member. Ms. Stagen stated that she had been motivated to become involved in the Commission because of the proposed tree regulations that Ms. Branson had spoken of. A motion was passed to recommend Ms. Stagen to the Board of Selectmen as a new alternate member of the Conservation Commission.

Motion: To recommend Ms. Stagen as a member of the Conservation Commission to the Board of Selectmen. By Ms. Payne. Passed Unanimously.

Hillside Farm Project

Ms. Payne stated that in previous meetings she had been in error and that Open Space Funds may only be put towards the acquisition of land directly owned by the town, and that because of this stipulation, the Conservation Commission would be unable to assist in the acquisition of this land for Steep Rock. It was then noted by the Commission that Steep Rock had succeeded in funding this project without this additional financial aid.

New Preston Open Space Management

Ms. Payne asked that Ms. Frank provide the Commission with an update on this issue. Ms. Frank explained that the equipment which New England Aquatic needed to perform this work was still being held up because of supply chain issues. She then stated that she hoped that this company could cut a small, but testable area of the New Preston Open Space by hand to demonstrate the effectiveness of this proposed treatment. She suggested allocating \$1,000.00 towards this project. Ms. Payne indicated that she would need to check the budget for this project, and Mr. Conroy stated that prior to allocating funds, the Commission should be given a clear indication of what area would be cut, where this would take place, and what cost would be involved in this endeavor. Mr. Gewanter asked what would happen to the cut plants, and a short discussion ensued regarding proper disposal of the cut phragmites.

2023 POCD ongoing discussion

Ms. Payne encouraged the Commission to look over the P.O.C.D., and to look over the Natural Resource Inventory Report as well. She indicated that maps in this report would need to be updated, and that both documents are readily available on the Town of Washington's website.

Western CT Clean Air Action Report – David Gewanter

Ms. Payne asked Mr. Gewanter if there was news to report on the Western Ct Clean Air Action Report. Mr. Gewanter stated that there was no news, and indicated that there was some internal discussion of how effective their efforts had been thus far. He then indicated that his testing had shown that Washington has clean air, and that the monitors will need to be recalibrated and maintained, which may be difficult going forward. The Commission then held a brief discussion on the potential future of the Western Ct Clean Air Action Committee.

Revisit guidance re Solar Panel placement

Ms. Payne indicated that the Board of Selectmen had begun to discuss solar within Washington and indicated that she hoped a joint effort could be made to introduce new regulation regarding solar farms in Washington.

Other and/or Old Business

Ms. Payne asked if the Commission would be open to moving the meeting to 5:00 instead of 5:15. Mr. Conroy indicated that 5:15 was easier and the Commission elected to maintain the same time.

Adjourn Meeting.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:54 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dennis Buell", is positioned above the typed name.

Dennis Buell
Conservation Commission Clerk
Town of Washington
10-7-2021