

WASHINGTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

November 2, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Payne, Ms. Frank, Mr. Conroy, Ms. Rawson, Ms. Stagen
ALTERNATES ABSENT: Mr. Horne
CLERK: Mr. Buell
OTHERS: Ms. Zukauskas

Seating of Members and Alternates

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:20 p.m. and seated Ms. Payne, Ms. Frank, Mr. Conroy, Ms. Rawson, and Ms. Stagen.

Approval of Minutes of Oct. 3, 2022

Ms. Rawson asked if the minutes for the October 3, 2022 meeting had accurately reflected the Commission's discussion on mowing at the proposed easement on Ives Road. Ms. Payne indicated that these minutes were accurate, and stated that the Steep Rock Association had suggested requiring that the easement be mowed once a year opposed to twice.

Motion: To approve the October 3, 2022 meeting minutes as written by Ms. Frank.
Seconded by Ms. Stagen. Passed 5-0.

Offer of Conservation Easement on Ives Rd

Ms. Payne informed the Commission that Attorney Coploff was still working to develop the deed restriction for the proposed easement on Ives Road. She went on to state that Attorney Coploff hoped to have this done by the next Conservation Commission meeting, and suggested holding a special meeting to discuss this document.

Green Energy Initiative – Linda Frank

Ms. Frank indicated that she had attended a presentation in Kent which had been put together by an organization named P.A.C.E. Ms. Frank explained that this organization conducts free energy evaluations of towns and creates recommendations for these towns to become more energy efficient. She stated that she would forward the presentation slides to the Commission. Discussion ensued.

Invasive Management with Steep Rock – Linda Frank & Rory Larson

Ms. Frank informed the Commission that she had met with representatives from the Steep Rock Association to discuss the invasive management plan which the Conservation Commission would be asked to develop within the upcoming P.O.C.D. Ms. Frank indicated that she would reach out to the Planning Commission for clarification on what would be expected from the Conservation Commission regarding this management plan. Ms. Rawson urged the Commission to use existing resources if possible due to the time commitment involved with creating this type of plan from the

ground up. Ms. Frank suggested attending the farmers market in Washington to educate the public on invasive species in the spring. Discussion ensued.

New Preston Open Space Management-Phragmites, Ryan Conroy

Mr. Conroy informed the Commission that he would be borrowing a pair of waders to conduct a site walk with Matt Vogt from New England Aquatics to examine treatment options for the phragmites at the New Preston Open Space.

Tree Regs Progress

Ms. Payne stated that work on the proposed tree regulations was ongoing, and that little progress had been made over the past few weeks.

Ms. Stagen informed the Commission that she had forwarded a new draft of her tree article to the Commission. Following this, Ms. Stagen indicated that she was working to determine what percentage of the town is currently protected by easements. Mr. Buell stated that he was under the impression that town had surpassed the goal of preserving 30% of it's land with easements and stated that he would look into what information he had on file related to this.

Mr. Buell went on to state that one of the three "asks" of the Commission which would be made within the P.O.C.D. would relate to the open space fund and urged the Commission to discuss this matter with the Planning Commission to gain clarity on this request. Following a brief discussion, Ms. Rawson and Ms. Frank indicated that they believed the request would be to encourage property owners to put money into the open space fund in lieu of providing open space during subdivisions. A brief discussion ensued.

2023 POCD ongoing discussion of items to be included in 2023

Ms. Payne indicated that she would still like to consider this agenda item at a future Commission meeting.

Western CT Clean Air Action Report – Linda Frank

Ms. Frank described the efforts of the Western CT Clean Air Action Committee, the towns that were involved with this Committee, and some of the difficulties they had faced during their investigation of the air quality in the region. Ms. Frank indicated that the work conducted by this Committee had raised awareness regarding air quality within the state. Mr. Conroy stated that the Cricket Valley facility had reportedly operated at a maximum of 25% of it's capacity which may have influenced the data collected by Western CT Clean Air Action Committee. The Commission then discussed the impact of running the facility at maximum capacity, and the need to be aware of other large projects in the region.

Revisit guidance re Solar Panel placement

The Commission discussed their continued concerns regarding solar panel permitting within the town. Mr. Buell explained some of the restrictions which currently exist within the town's regulations which would affect large scale solar farms. Ms. Frank indicated that she felt a regulation should be considered by the Zoning Commission which would require screening for ground mounted solar arrays. Mr. Buell suggested having the Commission speak with Mr. Furse,

who had previously provided the Commission with a presentation on the effects of large solar arrays.

Recommendations for two Alternate Vacancies

Ms. Frank reminded the Commission that there were still 2 alternate vacancies. The Commission briefly discussed ways to find new volunteers.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 6:07 by Mr. Conroy, seconded by Ms. Stagen.
Passed 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dennis Buell

Dennis Buell
Conservation Commission Clerk
Town of Washington
11-9-2022

A link to access a recording of this meeting is below.

https://townofwashingtoncc-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/dbuell_washingtonct_org/EtHyvi6NjdlAvlwI5kyQP8oBKrae0e47SGcUe5OgV-wn8Q?e=hLK34h