

WASHINGTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

December 7, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Payne, Ms. Frank, Mr. Conroy, Ms. Rawson, Ms. Stagen
ALTERNATES PRESENT: Mr. Horne
CLERK: Mr. Buell
OTHERS: Mr. Brinton - First Selectman, Ms. Zukauskas, Mr. Hayden

Seating of Members and Alternates

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. and seated Ms. Payne, Ms. Frank, Mr. Conroy, Ms. Stagen, and Mr. Horne (for Ms. Rawson.)

Approval of Minutes of Nov. 2, 2022

Motion: To approve the November 2, 2022 meeting minutes as written by Ms. Frank, seconded by Ms. Stagen. Passed 5-0.

Ms. Rawson joined the meeting via Zoom at 5:16 p.m. She was not seated by the Chair.

Approval of 2023 Meeting Calendar

Mr. Buell indicated that in previous years, the Commission had not met at their August meeting and asked if the Commission would like to meet in August of 2023. The Commission agreed to not schedule a meeting for August of 2023.

Motion: To accept the 2023 meeting calendar by Ms. Payne, seconded by Mr. Horne. Passed 5-0.

Revisit guidance re Solar Panel placement

Ms. Payne stated that she wished to move the discussion of solar energy up in the agenda because Mr. Brinton, First Selectman, was in attendance to discuss solar for the town. Mr. Brinton informed the Commission that the town was working to have solar panels installed at the firehouse, and at the transfer station. He indicated that the solar panels installed at the transfer station would be free for the town to install and maintain, and that they would generate approximately \$30,000.00 a year for the town. A short discussion ensued.

Invasive Management with Steep Rock – Linda Frank & Rory Larson

Mr. Brinton informed the Commission that the town would be hosting a meeting between 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. on December 8, 2022 to discuss invasive species management within the town and invited Commission members to attend.

Offer of Conservation Easement on Ives Rd

Ms. Frank indicated that following feedback from the Commission on the deed agreement for the proposed easement on Ives Road, Attorney Coploff had included language within the agreement to require that the easement be mowed at certain times of the year annually, and that the easement not be divided through a subdivision.

Following a brief discussion, Ms. Rawson suggested drafting a template deed agreement which could be distributed to applicants for future Conservation Commission easements. The Commission briefly discussed the origins of Conservation Easements, and how deed language for these easements have developed over time.

Motion: To accept the easement with the modifications by Ms. Frank,
seconded by Ms. Stagen. Passed 5-0.

Green Energy Initiative – Linda Frank

Ms. Frank informed the Commission that she did not feel that the Conservation Commission should work on the Green Energy Initiative as the Sustainability Committee was working on this agenda item.

New Preston Open Space Management-Phragmites, Ryan Conroy

Mr. Conroy indicated that he had been in contact with New England Aquatics and that they would return to the New Preston Open Space soon to cut phragmites. He explained that in areas where the plants cannot be cut under the water level, the phragmites will not be removed, and will instead be left on top of the root system which he, along with New England Aquatics, hope will slow the plant's growth next year.

Tree Regs Progress

Ms. Payne informed the Commission that no progress had been made regarding the proposed tree regulations, and indicated that she hoped to meet with Ms. Hill and Ms. Frank soon to discuss the proposed regulations further.

Mr. Conroy stated that he had attended the New Jersey League of Municipalities and that while at this event he had met representatives from the Shade Tree Federation of the State of New Jersey who had an exhibit booth at the event. He indicated that this organization had provided him with documentation on laws related to trees in New Jersey. Following this, Mr. Conroy explained that in New Jersey, permits are required to cut trees which are 36" in diameter or larger. A brief discussion regarding New Jersey's tree laws ensued.

Mr. Conroy went on to explain that he had obtained a flyer for a Massachusetts company which, like New England Aquatics, specializes in invasive species removal in and around wetlands. He indicated that representatives from this organization had informed him that herbicides are the only reliable way to remove phragmites from an area.

Ms. Rawson indicated that due to the prohibitive cost of invasive species management, she felt the town should consider focusing its efforts on habitats which contain rare, endangered, or threatened species which may be under increased stress due to the spread of invasive species. Ms. Rawson

then described ways that the town may potentially receive funding for invasive species management. Discussion ensued.

Trees, Loretta Skagen's article

Ms. Stagen indicated that she had forwarded the third draft of the tree article to the Commission, and explained that she would further revise this document after the invasive species management meeting which Mr. Brinton had invited the Commission to attend.

2023 POCD ongoing discussion of items to be included in 2023

Ms. Payne indicated she would like to discuss the upcoming P.O.C.D. at a future meeting.

Western CT Clean Air Action Report – Linda Frank

Ms. Frank reported that the Western CT Clean Air Action Committee was no longer meeting, and indicated that the efforts of this Committee had raised awareness regarding air quality within the State.

Ms. Frank stated that an article had been posted in the Spectrum Newspaper about this Committee, and indicated that she did not feel that this article adequately depicted the work that had been accomplished by the Committee.

Recommendations for two Alternate Vacancies

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 5:57 by Mr. Horne, seconded by Ms. Stagen.
Passed 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dennis Buell

Dennis Buell
Conservation Commission Clerk
Town of Washington
12-12-2022

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

https://townofwashingtongcc-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/dbuell_washingtonct_org/EgzYLYSvFgtLqEkbV5QHteQByG-hDmQpZQJ5gj9TbThOxg?e=sihdJa