

November 3, 2010

7:30 p.m. Land Use Meeting Room

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mrs. Roberts, Mr. Frank, Mr. Rimsky

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ms. Gager, Mrs. Jahnke

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Mrs. Braverman, Mr. Carey

ALTERNATE ABSENT: Mr. Fowlkes

STAFF PRESENT: Mrs. Hill

Mrs. Roberts called the Meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. and seated Members Frank, Rimsky, and Roberts and Alternates Braverman for Ms. Gager and Carey for Mrs. Jahnke.

Consideration of the Minutes

The 10/5/10 Regular Meeting minutes were accepted as corrected. On the last page it was noted that Mr. Frank could not have seconded the motion to adjourn because he had not attended the meeting.

MOTION:

To accept the 10/5/10 Regular Meeting minutes as corrected.

By Mr. Rimsky, seconded by Mrs. Roberts, and passed 5-0.

MOTION:

To include the following subsequent business not already posted on the agenda: 11/5/10 Land Use Chairmen/Selectmen Meeting.

By Mrs. Roberts, seconded by Mr. Frank, passed 5-0.

There were no new applications to consider.

Other Business

Plan of Conservation and Development:

Mr. Rimsky reported that the owners of the Food Market, Pantry, and Ericson Agency had agreed to meet with him. Mrs. Roberts suggested that because the holidays were approaching, perhaps the other business interviews should be postponed until after the end of the year. Mr. Carey noted that recently Bridgewater had drafted a concise in-house questionnaire to ask what general topics should be included in the update of its Plan. He will try to get a copy for reference. It was noted that at this time the Commission plans to build on the current Plan rather than work on a full rewrite. Mrs. Roberts stated that one focus of the update would be the business community.

Referral from the Zoning Commission/Revision of the Zoning Regulations/Section 13.10.3/Deletion of Minimum Apartment Size Under Residential Conversion of Older Homes:

Mrs. Roberts read the proposed language and Mr. Paul read Mr. Collum's 9/27/10 letter to the Zoning Commission asking that the Regulations be amended to permit 350 to 400 sq. ft. studio apartments. It was the consensus that the proposed revision was consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development because it promotes an alternative housing option.

MOTION:

Resolved; That the Washington Planning Commission approves the proposed revision to Section 13.10.3

of the Washington Zoning Regulations as consistent with the Town Plan of Conservation and Development because it promotes diversity of housing opportunities and supports economic growth. This resolution constitutes the report required by Section 8-3a of the Ct. General Statutes. By Mr. Frank, seconded by Mr. Carey, and passed 5-0.

Referral from the Zoning Commission/Revision of the Zoning Regulations/Sections 4.4.19 and 21.1.69/Summer Camp:

Mrs. Hill noted the comments made by Mr. McGuinness, Director of the NWCTCOG, in his 10/18/10 report. Mrs. Roberts and Mrs. Braverman agreed that the current proposed language would make conference centers possible throughout the R-1 District. Mr. Frank read the 10/18/10 report. Regarding the proposed definition of Summer Camp, Mr. Rimsky did not think it was worded precisely, while Mrs. Braverman referred to the phrase, "and other organized activities," noting this was very broad language. Mr. Frank reviewed Zoning Comm. minutes from 2007 when the Ebners first discussed expanding their camp. He said at that time most Zoning commissioners thought that revising the Regulations in the same manner as had been done to allow existing non conforming golf courses to expand by Special Permit would be the most efficient way to proceed. Mr. Frank stated that resolving a problem for a particular property by changing the Regulations for an entire district was generally not a good idea. Mr. Rimsky agreed, although he said he would not have a problem with permitting summer camps in the R-1 District if this use was well defined and appropriate standards were set. He said these standards should include emergency access requirements, septic requirements, maximum enrollment, and specific permitted activities. He thought the definition would have to be extraordinarily specific if the change was to be townwide. Mr. Frank thought that as proposed, the revision could have a substantial impact throughout Town and it would not maintain the character of the residential districts. Mr. Carey agreed that permitted activities in camps would have to be well defined and gave two examples, skeet shooting on Saturday mornings and paint ball camps, that would be disruptive to residential neighborhoods. Mrs. Roberts asked if the proposed use was consistent with the POCD, and it was unanimous that it was not. Mr. Frank read from a presentation made by Ms. Ebner Martin at the 5/21/07 Zoning Commission meeting, in which she listed the various types of activities proposed, said plans called for expanding the camp to provide year-round programs, and noted both adults and youths, as well as private organizations, would be attending. He then read the purpose of the Farming-Residential District in Section 4 of the Zoning Regulations. Mr. Carey did not think Planning should approve the proposal for the expansion of a non conforming use by adding a new highly permissive use throughout the entire district. All were in agreement that the proposed language was inadequate because it was not a precise and controllable regulation. Mr. Frank also noted the Commission should be consistent with its opinion given when permitting inns on town roads throughout the R-1 District had been considered.

MOTION:

Resolved: That the Washington Planning Commission does not approve the proposed revisions to the Washington Zoning Regulations (new sections 4.4.19 and 21.1.69 regarding Summer Camps) as written because they are not consistent with the Town Plan of Conservation and Development. They are contrary to the goal of the preservation of rural character because they would permit summer camps throughout the R-1 District without sufficient definition and standards. Furthermore, the Planning Commission recommends as an alternative that a regulation restricted to the expansion of non conforming use by existing summer camps be considered. This motion constitutes the report required by Section 8-3a of the Ct. General Statutes.

By Mr. Frank, seconded by Mrs. Roberts, and passed 5-0.

Mapping of the Shepaug River Floodplain Elevations:

The Commission reviewed the 11/3/10 letter to Mr. Lyon from Mr. Battista of Lenard Engineering, detailing the bids for this project. Mr. Carey briefly reported on the hiring process to date. He also noted that a resident had attended the last Selectmen's meeting to complain that the Planning Commission had

authorized the expenditure of \$17,000 for this mapping when, he said, FEMA would eventually do this work on its own. It was the consensus of the commissioners that knowing whether the current floodplain elevations are accurate is the essential first step in determining the most appropriate use for Town property and other properties in the Depot. It was also noted that currently FEMA would not engage in a discussion with the Town and would not indicate exactly when it would begin its work to confirm the Washington elevations. Mr. Carey said it is currently working in Old Saybrook. The Commission did not foresee that FEMA would begin any work here in the near future. With that in mind, the Commission had allocated the funds in good faith, to obtain this necessary data for the Depot.

Land Use Chairmen-Selectmen's Meeting:

Mrs. Roberts noted this meeting was scheduled for November 4th and said she would attend and give a brief update on the POCD.

Ethics Seminar/11/30/10:

Mrs. Hill reminded the commissioners there was still time to register. Mr. Rimsky signed up.

MOTION:

To adjourn the Meeting. By Mr. Frank.

Mrs. Roberts adjourned the Meeting at 9:02 p.m.

FILED SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

Respectfully submitted,
Janet M. Hill
Land Use Administrator