TOWN OF WASHINGTON

Bryan Memorial Town Hall

Post Office Box 383

Washington Depot, Connecticut 06794

Planning Commission Regular Meeting

**MINUTES**

February 3, 2021

7:30 P.M. – Meeting via Zoom

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**  Chairman Hileman, Ms. Matteo, Mr. Rimsky, Mr. Mongar, Ms. Gager

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mr. Carey

**STAFF PRESENT:** Ms. White, Ms. Rill

**PUBLIC PRESENT**: Mr. Charles, Ms. Gorra, Ms. Fernandez-O’Toole

Chairman Hileman called the meeting to order at 7:32pm.

**SEATED: Chairman Hileman, Mr. Rimsky, and Ms. Matteo, Mr. Mongar, Ms. Gager**

**CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES:**

Chairman Hileman made the following correction; page 2, under “Other Updates” it should read, “*the revision would allow an applicant to ask for a waiver through a Special Permit on a case-by-case basis*….”

**MOTION: To approve the January 6, 2021 Meeting Minutes as amended, by Ms. Gager, seconded by Mr. Rimsky, passed 5-0 vote.**

**NEW APPLICATIONS:**

No new Applications.

**PENDING APPLICATIONS:**

No Pending Applications.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATES:**

Sustainability Committee:

Ms. Matteo reported that the Committee has decided to meet on the second Wednesday of every month. She added that the Committee has budgeted for a Clerk, and has assigned members with tasks to complete so that the Committee reaches their goals.

Ms. Matteo stated that the Committee discussed the proposed Community Center and whether or not it would be Sustainable.

Ms. Gorra explained that when the proposed Community Center plans were brought to estimators that they were asked what would need to be done to allow solar energy. She stated that because the town is in the conceptual phase of planning and not the design phase that they would need to wait to determine the pitch of the roof as well as square footage.

Economic Development Committee:

Ms. Gorra stated that the January Public Information Meeting held via Zoom regarding the Community Center was well attended. She said there were a lot of great questions and ideas from the Public, and that the recording of the meeting is on the Town of Washington website.

Ms. Gorra’s next update was regarding the Broadband network in Washington, the education behind it, and hopes to possibly put together a Committee this year. She explained that she was interested in some software that tests the speed of the internet in town. Chairman Hileman explained that this is a free service provided by Geo Partners, and that occasionally they will be asking community members to test their internet speed. This will explain what Washington’s internet needs are. Mr. Rimsky stated that he felt this was very important at this time, with people working from home as well as distance learning and telemedicine.

Ms. Gorra’s final update was regarding sidewalks in the Depot. She stated that the grant they had applied for this project was denied, however they could reapply again in the future and that Washington was saving in the Capital budget for sidewalks every year. Ms. Gorra stated that she has been referencing the Depot Study that was done several years ago by the Planning Commission, and noticed several of the issues raised in that study were still true today. She asked Chairman Hileman if the Planning Commission had any plans to revisit this study.

Chairman Hileman explained that the study is now approximately 18 years old, and was very controversial at the time. He stated that there was no intention of revisiting the study.

Affordable Housing Commission:

Mr. Mongar updated the Commission by stating the Housing Commission will be meeting on Tuesday, February 9, 2021. The Housing Commission has been working on their plan, and had received a lot of feedback from their survey.

Mr. Mongar went on to state that Washington currently has 2% Affordable Housing as of 2019. Ms. Gorra added that there will be a public information event, possibly in early March, to explain what the Housing Commissions goals are.

The Commission discussed how the current Zoning Regulations effect affordable housing, and how the Housing Commission could petition the Zoning Commission to change the regulations. It was suggested that the Housing Commission be very specific in their language when presenting this to the Zoning Commission.

Reopening Committee:

Mr. Rimsky reported that First Selectman Brinton had sent a phone message out to residents regarding the Covid vaccine. He then stated that Shepaug had been remote learning due to a party that had occurred in recent weeks that had resulted in some Covid-positive cases. The next meeting will be held on Friday, February 5, 2021.

**2023 Plan of Conservation and Development:**

Chairman Hileman stated that he had reached out to Jocelyn Ayer of the Northwest Council of Governments regarding the 2023 Plan, and she explained that the Commission could opt to revise certain sections of the current Plan or revise the entire Plan and what the cost could be.

Ms. Gager suggested that the Commission put this out to bid in the next budget cycle. Chairman Hileman agreed.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

Chairman Hileman let the Commission know that the Board of Selectman has notified him that they will be proposing repair work to Gunn Hill Road, which is a designated Scenic Road. The Board of Selectman must hold a Public Hearing with submitted plans because of the Scenic Road designation.

**REVISION OF THE SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS:**

Chairman Hileman apologized to the Commission for not issuing them a copy of this, and promised to do so soon.

**ALTERNATE COMMISSION MEMBERS:**

Chairman Hileman stated that with the upcoming Plan of Conservation and Development work, that having a full Commission would be ideal, and asked the Commission to think of possible alternate members.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION: To adjourn the February 3, 2021 Washington Planning Commission Meeting at 8:58pm, by Ms. Gager, seconded by Ms. Matteo, passed 5-0 vote.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Tammy Rill

Land Use Clerk

January 8, 2021