

October 3, 2012

5:00 p.m., 2nd Floor Mtg. Room

Members Present: Susan Payne, Phil Markert, Diane Dupuis, Phil Dutton, Betsy Corrigan, Alt, Ann Quackenbos, Alt., Randy Bernard, Alt.

Absent: Linda Frank

Staff Present: Shelley White

Chairman Susan Payne called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Seated: Susan Payne, Phil Markert. Diane Dupuis, Phil Dutton, Ms. Quackenbos, Alt

Consideration of the Minutes

The Minutes of the September 5, 2012 Conservation Commission Meeting were considered.

Corrections:

Throughout the document: Quachenbos should be: Quackenbos

Motion:

to accept the September 5, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Conservation Commission as amended,

by Mr. Markert, seconded by Ms. Quackenbos, passed by 5-0 vote.

Projects and Referrals

Ms. Payne stated that the Washington Conservation Commission Easement Guidelines have been posted on the Town website.

Open Space

Ms. Payne stated that she calculated the Open Space and emailed the tally to the CC members as well as Mr. Law from Steep Rock Association. She stated that she received the 490 totals from the Tax Assessor's Office and the 490-acreage totals for forest is 4694.21 acres and farm is 2811.22 acres. Ms. Payne stated that these are not permanently protected land but she would add it to the tally and at the moment the Town of Washington has reached approximately 27% open space according to her calculations.

Annual Report

Ms. Payne stated that she has written the annual report and would like feedback from the CC members by Friday, October 5, 2012.

5:10 pm Mr. Dutton arrives and is seated.

5:12 pm Ms. Dupuis arrives and is seated.

Ms. Payne suggested that the CC members take a look at the State Plan of Conservation and Development. She stated that there is a map that is included that does not have any easements on

it for any of the towns and she submitted a comment regarding this. Ms. Payne read her statement to the State on behalf of Roxbury Land Trust and the Town of Washington Conservation Commission regarding the State POCD. She stated that all comments need to be submitted by Friday, October 5th and can be submitted on line.

Town Regulations to Review

Section 14:

Mr. Bernard stated that The Gunnery is up for a permit renewal for their treatment system, it is called a fast treatment system, which is an alternative treatment system that is decentralized and kind of a little sewage treatment plant for them. He wanted to talk about these advanced treatment systems, which are something that allows intensive development in an area where it may or may not be able to be supported and allows one to increase the density of a parcel or a development by putting in a "prepackaged treatment plant." He stated that there are a lot of towns that have regulations around these types of systems to limit growth and about where they put them and where they don't put them. He thinks that this topic is pertinent to how we could affect a positive environmental change through the regulations. He stated that there are plenty of model regulations on these types of systems and he wanted to put it out there as an example of a topic that he thinks is worthwhile pursuing in order to make recommendations for changing regulations. He stated that he would be able to look into regulations that other towns have in place. It was the consensus of the Commission that this is a worthwhile topic to look into.

Mr. Dutton stated that he attended the Planning Commission meeting last night and the main discussion was regarding diversified housing, which ties into the subject of alternative septic systems. He stated that he knows of someone that has put one of the engineered systems in to replace a cesspool on a very tricky piece of property. Mr. Bernard stated that there are some model regulations that say you could put these systems in to improve an existing situation but cannot put them in for new construction. Mr. Dutton stated that there is a down side to these systems but it could be a good thing in developing, for example, cluster housing.

There was a brief discussion regarding The Gunnery system

Mr. Markert asked Mr. Bernard if there were any guidelines from the federal or state authorities on when or if a town has to go to a centralized sewage treatment system.

Mr. Bernard responded that he did not think so but was not sure and that there are decentralized wastewater management districts in some towns, which have regulations in place to manage them.

Ms. Payne suggested contacting the Northwestern Connecticut Council of Governments. Mr. Bernard stated that he would write out request and Ms. White would forward it to NWCCOG.

Town Plan of Conservation and Development

Ms. Payne stated that she and Mr. Markert went to the Planning Meeting with the business owners in Town on September 13, 2012 and asked Mr. Dutton for feedback on last nights Planning Meeting with the Zoning.

Mr. Dutton stated that the four topics of concentration for the revised POCD are Housing, Vitality of Village Centers, Economic Development and Sustainability and summarized the main points of discussion from the meeting.

Ms. Payne stated that she felt the meeting with Planning and the business owners went very well and stated that Ms. Keilty was present to represent the Business Owners Association and talk about their campaign: "Think Local First." She noted that they have a wonderful website full of useful and up to date information about the Town. Ms. Payne noted that Mr. Talbot was present at the meeting and questioned the Consultants about their "methodology" for the revision of the POCD.

Ms. Payne stated that the Planning Commission wants to meet with the Conservation Commission to discuss the revision of the POCD as well and there was a brief discussion as to when this meeting would be scheduled.

Cell Tower Update

Ms. Payne stated that the Selectmen are expecting a lease for review and First Selectman Lyon stated that he would circulate it to others for review after it is received.

Knotweed Update

Ms. Payne updated the Commission on the New Preston Open Space and the Primary School knotweed control efforts. She stated that they have working on a test patch at the Primary School property away from the main areas where children play and it seems to be effective.

New Invasive – Porcelain Berry

Ms. Corrigan described Porcelain Berry as being in the grape family and highly invasive. She stated that we have it here on 109 and she has been noticing new colonies. Ms. Corrigan stated that next week she would be meeting with the DOT to discuss spraying.

Decommissioning of Street Lights

Mr. Dutton reported that Trooper Sordi has offered to provide a report every three to six months showing which lights are working and which ones are not. Ms. Payne suggested that Mr. Dutton follow up with Trooper Sordi. Mr. Dutton suggested looking at the map that they created indicating placement of lights and that the Conservation Commission might have to consider recommending the decommissioning of certain lights based on their own findings.

Other Business

First Selectman Lyon stated that the elm tree has arrived and the rest of the planting would be done the second week of October. .

There was a brief discussion regarding tree cutting on the New Preston Open Space property and scheduling another workday at the site.

Ms. Payne requested that each member go through the Zoning Regulations that are related to conservation and she suggested looking at the section regarding Special Permit standards.

The Commissioners briefly discussed what topics should be discussed with the Planning Commission at their joint meeting.

Adjournment

Motion: to adjourn at 6:08 pm by Ms. Payne, seconded by Ms. Dupuis.

Ms. Payne adjourned the meeting at 6:08 pm.

Submitted subject to approval,
Shelley White, Land Use Clerk