

Match 7, 2012

5:00 p.m. Land Use Mtg. Room

Members Present: Susan Payne, Linda Frank, Phil Markert, Phil Dutton, Randy Bernard, Alt.

Absent: Diane Dupuis, Betsy Corrigan, Alt

Staff Present: Shelley White

Others: Ann Quachenbos, Tom Osborne, Tree Warden, Denise Arturi, Bob Papson, Audrey Keen (Scott's Landscaping), Chris Charles

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

Seated: Susan Payne, Linda Frank, Phil Markert, Phil Dutton, Randy Bernard, Alt.

Consideration of the Minutes

The Minutes of the February 1, 2012 Conservation Commission Meeting were considered.

Corrections:

Pg. 3 – Last Motion should read: to adjourn at 5:50 pm by Mr. Bernard, seconded by Mr. Dutton.

Motion:

to accept the February 1, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Conservation Commission as amended,
by Ms. Frank, seconded by Mr. Dutton, passed by 5-0 vote.

Grant for Bryan Memorial Plaza Improvements

Mr. Osborne, Tree Warden and member of the Washington Tree Committee was present to discuss the America the Beautiful Grant – Bryan Memorial Plaza Planting Project. Ms. Arturi and Mr. Papson, also members of the Washington Tree Committee were present. Mr. Osborne stated that Scotts Landscaping created the plan and he displayed a three-season view of the planting material. He explained the plan to the Commission, which involves removal of the old Norway Maples, the planting of various native trees and shrubs, and identification plaques as well as curbing and other work. Mr. Osborne stated that the pay phone would be removed when and if a cell tower is installed and that the project would cost \$16,000.00. He stated that the America the Beautiful Grant was \$5,300.00, the Village Improvement Association has offered to buy all of the planting materials and the Washington Garden Club, Business Association, and Environmental Council have all contributed and they now only need \$5,250.00.

There was a brief discussion regarding the planting materials.

Mr. Dutton asked if all of the Norway Maples would be removed. Mr. Osborne stated that Mr. Pollock has offered to remove the trees at no cost to the Town and that the Town crew would remove the stumps.

Ms. Frank asked if there would be an issue with the sight line exiting the Plaza. Mr. Osborne stated

that there should not be an issue.

Mr. Osborne stated that the proposed Elm trees would do much better in the area and that the Norway Maples are in poor health. Mr. Dutton gave Mr. Osborne a picture of the Norway Maple Trees that was taken after the October 2011 snowstorm. He stated that the trees came through the storm without any damage. Mr. Dutton stated that he was not fully opposed to the proposed plan but that four trees would be taken down and only replaced with two shade trees. He asked if three shade trees would work in the plan. Mr. Osborne stated that the trees would be planted too close together and eventually one would have to be removed. Mr. Osborne stated that some of the Grant money would be going to maintenance, which would include bringing a water source close to the plantings.

Referrals and New Projects

The Gunnery Playing Fields- South Street:

Ms. Payne stated that there are no updates and that the Inland Wetlands Commission will continue deliberations tomorrow, March 8, 2012 at 5:30 pm. Ms. Payne read notes from an attendee of the Washington Inland Wetlands Commission Regular Meeting of March 1, 2012. She stated that the IWC is aware of the Conservation Commission's concerns.

Cell Tower Update

Mr. Markert stated that there are no new updates regarding cell towers. He stated that the First Selectman has had an inquiry from a cell tower company and will probably request a meeting with the Cell Tower Committee on March 16, 2012.

Decommissioning of Streetlights

Mr. Dutton stated that Trooper Sordi has looked at half of the streetlights on the town roads to see if any could be decommissioned and would potentially have recommendations for the Town. He stated that Trooper Sordi expressed concern to decommissioning some of the streetlights and asked if there was any information as to why they were placed in these locations in the first place.

Plan of Conservation and Development

The Commission read the letter written by Ms. Hill, Land Use Administrator to Prospective Consultants, dated 2-7-12 (on file in the Land Use Office), for the revision of the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Ms. White stated that the Planning Commission discussed Chapter 7- Implementation of the current POCD at their last meeting (3-6-12) and that the PC would like a consultant to look at the results of the current process and try to find a way to proceed more efficiently and improve the communications between the commissions. Mr. Markert stated that having up front assistance is a good start but he feels that there should be someone under contract for a couple of years to assist the commissions through the implementation.

Motion:

The Conservation Commission commends the Planning Commission for recognizing the need for professional assistance in developing a plan however; we feel it is essential if we are going to implement any kind of plan that that assistance continues through several years of implementation, by Mr. Markert, seconded by Mr. Dutton, passed by 5-0 vote.

State of Connecticut Plan of Conservation and Development

Ms. Payne stated that the draft for the State of Connecticut Plan of Conservation and Development would be discussed at a meeting tomorrow night (3/8/12) at 7 pm in Warren, CT. She briefly read some of the topics in the document. The Commission discussed “infill development” and “cross acceptance.”

There was a brief discussion regarding public utilities and water companies. Mr. Bernard stated that Aquarion has bought the local water company.

The Commission briefly looked at the maps that accompanied the State’s draft POCD.

New Preston Open Space

The Commission planned two working days to mark and brush hog a walking trail at the New Preston Open Space. Ms. Payne stated that she would contact the neighborhood committee to inform and invite them to participate this Saturday, March 10 at 1pm and this Sunday, March 11, 2012 at 1pm.

Other Business

The Commission considered Attorney Kelly’s letter to the First Selectman dated February 14, 2012 (on file in the Land Use Office) regarding tax assessor’s practices regarding farmland classification pursuant to C.G.S. §12-07c.

The Commission briefly discussed the DEP Aquifer Protection Area Program Municipal Manual.

The Commissioners agreed that they would email Ms. Payne 3 goals for the Conservation Commission.

Mr. Charles stated that he would have a baseline report for the Nussbaum Easement and the GPS coordinates done for the Conservation Commission and then would inform the Commission so they could schedule a site visit. He discussed the new guidelines that are required for easements.

Adjournment

Motion:

to adjourn at 6:40 pm by Ms. Frank, seconded by Mr. Dutton.

Ms. Payne adjourned the meeting at 6:40 pm.

Submitted subject to approval,
Shelley White, Land Use Clerk