

TOWN OF WASHINGTON
Bryan Memorial Town Hall
Post Office Box 383
Washington Depot, Connecticut 06794
Planning Commission Regular Meeting
MINUTES
November 1, 2023

7:30 P.M. – Hybrid Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Hileman, D. Rimsky, C. Matteo, J. Averill

MEMBERS ABSENT: S. Gager,

ALTERNATES PRESENT: VIA Zoom: D. Varnish

ALTERNATES ABSENT: S. Mongar

STAFF PRESENT: S. White, M. Gorra

PUBLIC PRESENT: A. Jamieson - Voices

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

Seated for this meeting is Chair Hileman, D. Rimsky, D. Varnish (via ZOOM), C. Matteo and J. Averill.

Consideration of the Minutes – October 4th, 2023:

MOTION: To approve the October 4, 2023 Washington Planning Commission Meeting Minutes a submitted, Chair Hileman made the Motion and D. Rimsky seconded, approved 5-0 vote.

Motion to Include Items Not on the Agenda:

Chair Hileman added a brief report on broadband.

MOTION: To add Report on Broadband to the agenda. Approved unanimously 5-0 vote.

New Applications:

No new applications.

Pending Applications:

No pending applications

Committee Reports/Updates:

Sustainability:

C. Matteo noted no update for Sustainability.

Economic Development Committee:

M. Gorra discussed what a success the Harvest Fest was. Local businesses also noted increased business that day. Roughly 2,500 hundred people came to town that day.

Report on Broadband

Chair Hileman went to a conference hosted by DEEP on the Broadband Committee for the state. He made it a point to attend because he was interest in learning more details about the broadband money. Approvals are anticipated after the new year in which Chair Hileman is focused on when applications start so the town can attempt to apply to finish the quarter of town not covered by Frontier. Chair Hileman noted on the map system the Broadband Committee made, it shows that Washington is all served when the data was supplied to the state from Spectrum. He noted the upload speed reported to the state by Spectrum is false because at his own house is has not been able to achieve more than 13mbps upload speed when the state requirement to be considered served is 20. Chair Hileman noted while the funds for this program come from the state, where they see the money fit is based on the FCC map that essentially shows Washington is taken care of already.

Referral from Washington Zoning Commission – Revision to Zoning Regulations

The Commission discussed the new regulations for Multifamily Housing within town. The purpose of adding section 13.12 Multifamily Housing is to provide a limited additional opportunity for Multifamily Housing in all zoning districts without changing the essential rural, historic and low-density residential composition of the Town of Washington. There are two types of Multifamily Housing: new construction and conversion of existing housing or buildings that are address and promoted within this section of the zoning regulations. Public Act 2129 made it so towns could no block out Multifamily Housing due to reasons such as maintain rural character.

Chair Hileman noted no decisions would be made on this new section of zoning regulations but rather the opportunity for commissioners to wrap their head about the details of the proposed regulation. The commission discussed even if the purpose of 13.12 is to provide opportunity in “all zoning districts” there are still parameters that need to be met for approval such as health, wetlands (if applicable), and zoning approval. Chair Hileman noted Section 13.12.2 “Findings” implies that some sort of study must have been done which it has not therefore findings don’t belong in regulations. Chair Hileman noted that section 13.12.3 protects from the big developer coming in but then also penalizes a homeowner if for example they attempt to subdivide their property to allow kinship to build on said property. Special permits will be required for Multifamily Housing. The commissioners questioned the design section of the proposed zoning regulation as it pertains to distance from parking and distances between buildings. It was unclear to the commission what zoning was trying to put forth in this section. D. Rimsky said that it was clear there was no plot map made for this section and recommended it be further reviewed by a plot mapper.

Commissioners also discussed the restrictions within the proposed 13.12.6 zoning regulation as it pertains to “harmonious in appearance.” Commissioners noted that this section can cause future issues. The commission discussed that 13.12.17 essentially requires a landscape architect which imposes a large cost on smaller projects. Members circled back to the fact that this proposed regulation does not differentiate between duplex’s and larger projects such as 20 units or more. D. Rimsky noted it appears these regulations were taken from something boiler plate therefore it is not fit for discussion of smaller developments. Chair Hileman said he would compile notes on the discussed document and pass it along to the Commissioners where they could go in and add comments to be sent directly to S. White.

Continued Discussion – 2023 Plan of Conservation and Development:

No Discussions for this meeting.

Communications:

No Communications for this meeting.

Administrative Business:

No Administrative Business for this meeting.

Adjourn:

MOTION: To adjourn the November 1, 2023 Washington Planning Commission Regular Meeting at 9:14 pm by Chair Hileman, seconded by D. Rimsky, approved unanimously 5-0 vote.

Recording can be found here:

https://townofwashingtongcc-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/jrebillard_washingtonct_org/EcIGBuDBI0BJtm1nbP8Ks2EBMI4G1d-L0xOjSIInRCJj8Q?e=Eo9G7O

Respectfully Submitted,

Justine Rebillard

Land Use Clerk

November 6, 2023

***Minutes filed, subject to approval**