

TOWN OF WASHINGTON
Bryan Memorial Town Hall
Post Office Box 383
Washington Depot, Connecticut 06794
Planning Commission Regular Meeting
MINUTES
September 6, 2023

7:30 P.M. – Hybrid Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Hileman, D. Rimsky, C. Matteo, VIA Zoom: 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 7:30pm.

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

Consideration of the Minutes – August 2, 2023:

One correction, top of second page. First draft of map should be changed to first draft of plan and all other mentions of map changed to plan.

MOTION: To approve the amended August 2, 2023 Washington Planning Commission Meeting Minutes, by D. Rimsky made the Motion and C. Matteo seconded, approved 5-0 vote.

Motion to Include Items Not on the Agenda:

No items to add to the Agenda

New Applications:

No new applications.

Pending Applications:

No pending applications

Committee Reports/Updates:

Sustainability:

C. Matteo discussed how the Lake Waramaug taskforce hired a group to do a wake boat study.

Economic Development Committee:

M. Gorra brought up the Farmers Market and how about \$200,000-\$300,000 was generated via the market this summer bringing +/- 300 people a day. Local businesses noted they were busier when the farmers market was open. There was a discussion regarding the challenge with parking and making it easier for patrons to find parking.

Referral from Washington Zoning Commission – Revision to Zoning Regulations

Residents have petitioned the Zoning Commission for the removal of section 12.5.2 under Accessory Structures in the Town of Washington Zoning Regulations. This section references the volume of the ground floor area as it pertains to a portion (not to exceed 75%) of the ground floor coverage of the primary dwelling. S. White references her report and how our regulation references “ground floor area” or CT building code but how actually CT building code defines floor area in terms of “gross” or “net”. S. White suggested that the definition of “floor area” should include attached garage structures and should be updated to the current CT building code definition. She mentioned that the regulation contradicts our goal of low impact development if we are going to make people add on to their homes when they propose an accessory structure more than 75% of the “ground floor area and volume,” of the primary dwelling. The Commissioners discussed how the regulation rewards owners with larger homes who propose accessory structures due to the larger size of the home and penalizes those living in smaller homes. S. White discusses not getting rid of the regulation entirely but rather eliminating the stipulation that references 75% ground floor coverage or using current terminology to correspond with CT building code. She is researching other towns and how they regulate accessory structures. M. Gorra made mention of setting a square footage (2,000) that is allowed regardless of your home size for shop storage. Ms. White agreed and noted that the regulations specify square footage with accessory apartments. Planning discussed drafting recommendations to be made to the Zoning Commission. Chair Hileman noted the regulations shouldn’t punish people for having a smaller home.

Continued Discussion – 2023 Plan of Conservation and Development:

Chair Hileman discussed the edits to the Plan of Conservation and Development in preparation for the 2023 POCD. He noted that 15 pages of the plan are updated and in draft form. One sentence was added to the Introduction that states this POCD supersedes the previous plan if conflict occurs. State statute requires that the History of the town is included. Chair Hileman added a portion including Steep Rock Preserve history as well as when our town adopted zoning. No hard data was added in the Demographics and Housing section as the census was distorted in 2020 due to the COVID pandemic. Two new issues were added to the draft referencing the Affordable Housing Plan. Natural resources, historic features and open space refer to the updated set of maps. Goal 1 was given to Chair Hileman by Steep Rock where he added another sentence that discusses including Steep Rock for future open space acquisitions because they are more educated and trained on the topic. Commission members discussed how the Explore Washington website has been a miss of sorts. Dirt roads were discussed as not really sustainable and how the Town should consider whether to pave or continue to maintain these dirt roads. Village Centers & The Lake; many items have not been implemented that were listed in the 2014 POCD. Commission members discussed that due to the increased intensity of development along the lake, this section needs to be addressed and updated. Municipal facilities and Infrastructure; Chair Hileman wants to include other facilities and infrastructures that aren’t necessarily owned and operated by the town but are important to the town to be recognized in this section.

Communications:

No Communications for this meeting.

Administrative Business:

No Administrative Business for this meeting.

Adjourn:

MOTION: To adjourn the September 6, 2023 Washington Planning Commission Regular Meeting at 9:06 pm by D. Rimsky made the Motion and D. Varnish seconded, approved 5-0 vote. Meeting

Recording can be found here:

https://townofwashingtoncc-my.sharepoint.com/:v/g/personal/jnolletti_washingtonct_org/EXqJFollrKVAvLNzqgoqLqABX3Om_ZSgeJuFs3sw40p0AA?e=MIm4rs

Respectfully Submitted,

Justine Rebillard

Land Use Clerk

September 11, 2023

***Minutes filed, subject to approval**