**WASHINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION: SUSTAINABLITY COMMITTEE**

Susan Jahnke (Chair), Mark Picton, Peter Armstrong, Dick Heffernon, Chris Charles

11/23/15 4:00 p.m. Congregational Church Parish Hall

Draft meeting notes by Mark Picton and Chris Charles prepared 11/30/15

Attending: Susan Jahnke, Chris Charles, Mark Picton, Peter Armstrong, Dick Heffernon

Joining us: Tony Bedini, Dan Sherr, for a discussion on economic development

The committee initially discussed what we were ready to contribute to the economic development initiative. We would refine our papers on steps to take as a committee, and ideas on a vision and brand that related to sustainability for Washington to use in public relations.

When Tony and Dan joined us, we discussed some of the actions we could participate in with the economic development team. Our action items are drawn from the POCD chapter on sustainability.

Dan indicated that regarding the revitalization of town centers as living places, addressing water and sewage disposal in New Preston, Marbledale, and the Depot would be paramount. We agreed that a number of objectives hinge on this. Chris brought up the Moore property as a likely leaching site, but observed that it was bought as conservation land without regard to this need. We discussed the desirability of exploring the septic capabilities in the depot and the overall disjointedness of the depot for pedestrians as an example of why any town initiative like the Bryan Plaza renovations should be integrated with other town planning concerns that relate to it, rather than red-lined at artificial boundaries.

 Clarifications on this item offered subsequently by Chris:

 The Depot:

a. Either the 2003 POCD or the 2005 PC Depot Study stated that an analysis of the soils in the Depot should be performed to determine: the various soils in the Depot, the maximum residential capacity of the Depot, the best areas for construction, and the commercial, municipal, and residential scenarios for the Depot. That has yet to be performed, though the FEMA Flood Plain has been field verified.

b. The RW Black Co. offered the Depot Water Company to the Town, the Town passed, and so Aquarion bought the water company.

New Preston:

a. Chris originally I brought the Moore property (31 acres) to the Town's attention for @ 6 single-family, 10 one-bedroom senior condo units, and 26 acres were to be reserved for Septic for New Preston Village Center (hidden in restored Open Space.) About 20 members of the BoS and Town Commissions reviewed the property and agreed it was worth pursuing. Owen Moore's "ASK" was $325,000. The Town did not pursue actively enough, so Owen sold it to a developer for @ $375,000. Several years later the Town purchased it from the developer for $500,000 ($550,000?), but they used the CC's Open Space funds, so there is no development allowed.

b. The Washington Community Housing Trust upgraded the NP Water Co. The water main runs as far as the NP Boy's Club.

Marbledale:

a. The White Horse Tavern is building a Force Main Septic System. This is a method that our Village Centers could potentially apply to expand their septic capacity.

b. The closest Water Company is @ Quarry Ridge. This water company serves Quarry Ridge and MYFIELD. Arguably it could be expanded to serve the Marbledale Village Center.

Dan mentioned his interest in agriculture in the northwest corner, and the work of the Council of Governments and “Partners for Sustainable and Healthy Communities” organization which supports local agriculture and is considering developing a food hub in Torrington.

We agreed that supporting new local agricultural and food system enterprises in Washington, with increased marketing locally and in urban areas like New York and New Haven, would be a central way to work toward a more sustainable, food-secure town, and would also tend to increase economic and social activity. The Texaco station plans do not accommodate a farmers’ market location, but there are other options including the Town Hall lawn.