Town of Washington

**Bryan Memorial Town Hall**

#### Washington Conservation Commission

#### Minutes

**February 4, 2015**

Members Present:Susan Payne, Linda Frank

Members Absent: Phil Markert, Randy Bernard, Diane Dupuis

Alternates Present: Ann Quackenbos, Betsy Corrigan

Alternates Absent: Dirk Sabin

Staff Present: Janice Roberti

Ms. Payne, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM.

Seated: Susan Payne, Linda Frank, Ann Quackenbos, Betsy Corrigan

Consideration of the Minutes – January 7, 2015

The Commission considered the regular meeting minutes of the Conservation Commission for January 7, 2015.

Correction:

Page 1- **Under Zoning Regulations on Ridgeline Protection,** 2nd paragraph, 3rd sentence **should read** - *Ms. Frank will go back to the HVA for additional maps…..*

MOTION: To accept the January 7, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Conservation

Commission as amended. By Ms. Frank, seconded by Ms. Corrigan, passed by 4 – 0

vote.

Zoning Regulations on Ridgeline Protection – Linda Frank

Ms. Frank presented the Conservation Commission’s new map entitled “*Elevation Map Areas Greater Than 850 Ft. Town of Washington, Sponsored by the Washington Conservation Commission”.*

The map would be tied to the “horizon line” indicating also that Kent used the term “horizon line”. Ms. Frank stated that the Conservation Commission will go forward using the term “horizon line”. Ms. Payne stated that in checking her notes from the 1/7/15 meeting, it was agreed by the Commission that the word “ridgeline” would not be used (not stated in the 1/7/15 minutes). Ms. Frank explained the map colors, overlays, elevations, preserved areas and other markings. She commented that the town does not have many areas that are endangered. One of the areas Ms. Frank is concerned about is an area in New Preston that is endangered. This area is high in elevation and very steep. Ms. Frank will meet with Nick Solley and Ralph Averill to see what their opinions are and then it would have to go to Zoning and probably a review by the Town Attorney, David Miles (this would be a Zoning Department decision).

The discussion continued regarding the revised Kent draft of 8/11/14 from the Kent Land Use Administrator Donna Hayes. Ms. Hayes distributed a publication entitled “*Horizon Line Conversation Overlay District*” at the October 1, 2014 meeting.

Ms. Frank questioned whether or not a new piece of property coming up for sale would have to go to Zoning if the property was in the map site or could the Zoning Enforcement Officer approve it? Ms. Payne said that would be a question for Nick Solley and it is a good idea for another person to weigh in on that. Ms. Payne said it would be valuable to check back with Ms. Hayes from Kent to find out whether there were revisions made to the Kent draft. Ms. Frank said she would check if this was passed by Kent and that the draft could be a simplification. Ms. Payne stated that if the draft is a revision, it would be worth reviewing to determine which is a better document and confirm what is currently active in Kent now.

MOTION:To work with the new Elevation Map entitled *“Elevation Map - Areas Greater than 850 ft., Town of Washington, sponsored by The Washington Conservation Commission”*, by the Housatonic Valley Association dated 1/29/15. This map will be used for the Commission’s proposed Horizon Line Conservation Regulations which, if approved, will become part of the Town Zoning Regulations. By S. Payne, seconded by Ms. Quackenbos, Passed by 4 to 0 vote.

Fiscal Year 2015 – 2016 Budget – Susan Payne

Ms. Payne stated that the Commission usually gets a budget around $6000.00. She discussed allocations with commission members: CACIWC newsletter, updating maps, legal monitoring, consultant fees, brochure printing, New Preston open space mowing, New Preston Falls clean up, knotweed work in the school yard (in the Buildings and Property budget).

A discussion ensued about cleaning up the New Preston Falls area and the length of time the Commission has been requesting funding. Perhaps teaming up with the New Preston businesses would be a good idea. The New Preston Village Improvement Society conducts periodic fund raisers, a good venue to raise awareness. Ms. Payne stated that there is a broken bridge and that this is the state’s responsibility. The Town should take advantage of improving this scenic gateway into New Preston and make it visible to the public. Dirk Sabin recommended steps providing access down to the river/falls which would be helpful. Ms. Payne said she will continue to discuss cleanup with the town.

Walker Brook Degradation AdvisoryPlan Further Update – Randy Bernard

Mr. Bernard was not in attendance at this meeting. Ms. Payne did not try to develop a memo herself so the Commission will put that on an agenda when Mr. Bernard is able to attend. The memo would go to the appropriate people in New Milford and Washington suggesting getting together, conducting a small scale project on Walker Brook, whereby Washington may be able to replicate what New Milford has done to determine the real cost.

New Preston Open Space Update – Susan Payne, Betsy Corrigan

In 2013 Steep Rock received about 42 acres in easements and a fee gift of 6.83acres.The Nussbaum Conservation easement had not been added in the running list of October 2012 because the easement was not signed until 2013. The new total, as of 2013, is 6738.7 acres, permanently protected. There was a conservation easement that Steep Rock bought from

Regine Laverge. Ms. Payne will find out what the acreage is from the Steep Rock Association and bring the information to the March 3, 2015 meeting. Permanently protected land is now at 27.2% in Washington.

Ms. Corrigan said she is waiting for the snow to subside so she can go to the New Preston open space to look at the woody vegetation. During the full growing season, when the vegetation is so dense, it is very difficult.

Planning Commission – Susan Payne

Janet Hill, Washington’s Land Use Administrator, provided CD’s of the Town Plan of Conservation and Development (TPOCD). Hard copies will also be available. The Planning Commission asked if anyone on Conservation would like to serve on a sustainability subcommittee. There is a section on sustainability in the TPOCD. There were no volunteers at this 2/4/15 meeting. Ms. Payne will check with the members not present. Once the Conservation Commission sees what this new subcommittee is, who is on the committee and what the committee is trying to accomplish, there might be some volunteers.

Gunnery Soccer Field Update – Susan Payne

Ms. Payne displayed plans provided by Mike Ajello, Zoning Enforcement Officer. Ms. Payne distributed the smaller map. Members reviewed sections of the plan. Topics that came up were:

demarcation lines, disturbance, water runoff, clearing, plantings, property lines, chain link fence, artificial turf, layered bleachers(size and quantity), parking, the views for surrounding neighbors, lighting of the field to hold big games (which was not in the agreement).

Cell Tower Update – Susan Payne

Ms. Payne reported that there is no news on the cell tower from anyone. Ms. Corrigan asked when the service would start. Ms. Payne said there is no definitive date but the town is trying to put pressure on the cell tower real estate individuals who built the tower.

Motion: To adjourn by Ms. Corrigan.

Ms. Payne adjourned the meeting at 6:10 PM.

Submitted Subject to Approval,

Janice Roberti, Conservation Commission Clerk February 10, 2015