**WASHINGTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**BRYAN HALL PLAZA**

**WASHINGTON CT**

**MINUTES – JANUARY 4, 2017**

**5:00 PM** **LAND USE CONFERENCE ROOM**

Members Present: Susan Payne, Linda Frank, Diane Dupuis, Randy Bernard, Tyler O’Hazo

Members Absent: None

Alternates Present: Ann Quackenbos, Dirk Sabin

Alternates Absent: None

Others: Carrie Rowe, Eliza Paolucci, Washington Environmental Council

Ms. Payne introduced Ms. Carrie Rowe and Ms. Eliza Paolucci of the Washington Environment Council (WEC) as guests. It would be helpful if the CC had an active WEC member on the Commission in order to work closely together, join forces, not duplicate efforts and accomplish goals.

Appointment to the Conservation Commission

Ms. Payne opened the meeting at 5:00 PM and introduced Mr. Tyler O’Hazo as a new regular member effective 1/1/2017. There is still one more alternate vacancy to be filled.

Consideration of the Minutes – December 7, 2016

Members reviewed the minutes and there were no changes .

 MOTION: To accept the December 7, 2016 meeting minutes. By Ms. Frank, seconded by

 Mr. Bernard, passed 5 – 0

 Annual Election of Officers

 MOT MOTION: To appoint Ms. Payne as Chair and Ms. Frank as Vice Chair for the term January 1, 2017 to

 December 31, 2017. By Mr. Bernard, seconded by Ms. Dupuis, passed 5 to 0.

Review of the Deed of Conservation Restriction “Whereas” Clauses/Ingrassia Subdivision – Open

Space Set Asides– Attorney Kelly

 Attorney Kelly generated a two-page document containing all of the “Whereas” clauses and distributed it to the members. He struck out the lines that he thought weren’t really necessary and that did not apply.

 Mr. Sabin questioned section 3.4 “*the right to remove invasive plant species…..”* to insure that invasive plant removal is encouraged. Ms. Payne agreed that it was a good point given the location. Attorney Kelly said he will add “*subject to grantee’s consent*” in 3.4 and then add 3.4 to 4.5.

Ms. Payne asked if there were any further questions or comments. There were none.

 MOTION: To accept the recommendations of Attorney Kelly for the Deed of Conservation Restriction between Timothy Ingrassia and Stephanie Ingrassia and The Town of Washington for the property located at 292 Bee Brook Road in Washington CT. By Ms. Frank, seconded by

 Ms. Payne, passed 5 to 0.

 Tree Cutting – What regulations does the town need? – Summary from NWCOG – Susan Payne

 Ms. Payne read a portion of an email that Janet Hill sent to her regarding whether the Town of Washington has regulations that limit tree cutting. Ms. Hill stated that generally a permit is not required for tree cutting with the following exceptions:

* cutting/clearing within an inland wetlands or regulated area because generally the IW Commission does not favor clear cutting in these areas. The canopy is very important for the wetlands.
* commercial timber harvesting, in which case a permit from the Selectmen’s Office is needed

The clerk distributed a list of responses from eight (8) COG towns in Litchfield County responding to an email from Mark Lyon requesting information on their policy or regulations for managing tree cutting. The members reviewed the document and a lengthy discussion ensued. Ms. Frank will ask Steve Wadelton, Vice Chairman of Inland Wetlands, if CACIWC (Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetland Commissions) has any information they could share.

2014 TPOCD – Environmental Sustainability Actions Items – Susan Payne

Ms. Payne reiterated the Action Items that CC has decided to undertake:

Action Item #1) Protecting trees, implementing sound forestry management and educating the public

Action Item #2) Ongoing work on the preservation of horizon lines and viewsheds

New Preston Falls

Beautification - The members discussed beautifying the falls area.

First Selectman Lyon – believes a Beautification Permit will work best; when the final recommendations come from DOT, work can be started on the permit through DOT in Thomaston

* Ms. Payne - suggested putting together a meeting to discuss all the possibilities
* Mr. Bernard - suggested a landscaping plan
* Mr. Sabin - an existing survey would give Conservation a concept; volunteered to get a survey of the New Preston Falls parcel owned by the Town
* Ms. Dupuis – volunteered to research tree regulations throughout the state and elsewhere
* Ms. Payne - would like to see the area opened up so when people drive by they are able to see the beauty of the area
* Mr. Bernard - suggested using the parking down at the bottom for those who would like to take a walk to see historic points of interest in the area
* Various members - discussed the history of the area mentioning that in the past there were 19 water power mills.

DOT Issue – Susan Payne

Beavers have dammed up the area at the RT 202 culvert. Members discussed what should be done.

Ms. Payne suggested making a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen re breaking the dams.

Mr. Bernard suggested monitoring downstream of the entrance to the New Preston Open Space. It was decided to make a motion/recommendation.

Per Selectman Lyon - The downstream area was the only area that he gave permission to work in. DOT did the dam removal as it was blocking their culvert

 MOTION: For the Conservation Commission to recommend that removal of any beaver dams be confined to the area downstream of the entrance to the New Preston Open Space. By Mr. Bernard, seconded by Ms. Dupuis, passed 5 to 0.

Tree clearing, invasives cleanup, public access project – Susan Payne

Ms. Payne said that the CC should schedule a work day early in March 2017.

LID Regulations and Horizon Line/Viewshed Protection – Linda Frank and Dirk Sabin

 Ongoing. Still awaiting report from Sean Hayden. This was chosen as one of the Action Items for the CC to pursue for the TPOCD.

Phragmities Eradication at New Preston Open Space – Randy Bernard

The project is stalled until spring of 2017.

Goals for 2017

Agreed upon 2017 Goals:

1. New Preston Fall completely clean up area of dead trees, invasives, debris

 create public access

 identify historic extant features

 make visible from Route 202 as gateway into New Preston Village

 work on parking along Route 202 for the Village

 2) Regulation preserving and protecting ridgelines using viewshed guidelines to be adopted by Zoning

3) Tree cutting regulations

4) Promote Low Impact Sustainability Development (LISD) with Sean Hayden

Lake environmental issues – Ann Quackenbos

Ms. Quackenbos discussed the issue of some fences and hedges being quite high. Ms. Quackenbos said there is a regulation but it is not being enforced. She will investigate.

*Subcommittee Reports and Assignments*:

* New Preston Open Space

Ms. Payne discussed scheduling a workday in March 2017.

* Cell Tower Committee – Diane Dupuis

No discussion at this meeting

* Town water resources protection

 No discussion at this meeting

Other Business Not on the Agenda

Stewardship Fee Adjustment

Ms. Payne discussed the response from Town Attorney David Miles regarding the use of funds from the Open Space and Land Acquisition Fund. Attorney Miles stated that since the stewardship fee schedule will be established by a regulation adopted by the Commission, it is subject to the requirement that it be approved at a town meeting. He also stated that the CC can use those funds for stewardship expenses of properties owned by the Town whether or not they were acquired through the Fund. The use of such funds is subject to a use limitation applied to land that possesses existing natural resource values in need of preservation as opposed to land in need of restoration.

MOTION: To amend the Conservation Commission’s approved Stewardship Fee of $2500 to $3000 with the approved minimum $250.00 flat fee per acre. By Ms. Payne, seconded by Mr. Bernard, passed 5 to 0.

 Fire Training Center – Application for Special Zoning Permit

 Janet Hill, Land Use Administrator, provided Ms. Payne with a copy of the zoning special permit proposing

 the construction of a fire training center facing Mygatt Road which is specifically zoned for residential use.

 There is currently a training center in Danbury, New Milford and Torrington so the question is whether there

 is an actual need for one in Washington?

 2017 – 2018 Budget

 Ms. Payne asked members to suggest items for the CC budget

* Ms. Frank suggested a budget addition for membership in the Northwest Hill’s Council of Government (NHCOG)
* Add funds to the CC Open Space Fund for ongoing expenses such as invasive removal, the possibility of a hire for monitoring properties and whatever else may arise

 Woodville commercial district – proposed boundary expansion

 Janet Hill provided Ms. Payne a map showing the current boundaries and the proposed additional area and a

 document entitled “*Possible Revisions to the Washington Zoning Regulation*”. Ms. Hill said that the language

 is not final and a public hearing has not been scheduled. There could be other changes. The Commissioners

 reviewed the documents and it was agreed that the Commission wants to raise public awareness.

 MOTION: For the Conservation Commission to raise awareness of the issue of the potential water quality impact to the Shepaug River relevant to the proposed extension of the Woodville Business District Boundaries. By Mr. Bernard, seconded by Ms. Payne, passed 5 to 0.

Since there was no further business to discuss Ms. Payne adjourned the meeting at 6:45 PM.

Submitted subject to approval,

Janice Roberti, Conservation Commission Clerk