Conservation Commission Meeting

**Minutes December 2, 2015**

Members Present: Susan Payne, Linda Frank, Randy Bernard, Phil Market

Members Absent: Diane Dupuis

Alternates Present: Ann Quackenbos

Alternates Absent: Betsy Corrigan, Dirk Sabin

Ms. Payne called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM and seated Ann Quackenbos.

October 7, 2015 Minutes - Review

The commissioners reviewed the October 7, 2015 minutes. Correction: Page 2,

Lake Environmental Issues, 4th sentence should read “The valve in the dam at the head of the lake which lets water out got stock”.

MOTION: To accept the October 7, 2015 minutes as amended. By Ms. Payne, seconded by Ms. Frank, passed 5 to 0.

November 4, 2015 Minutes - Review

The commissioners reviewed the November 4, 2015. Correction: Page 1, under Horizon Line Protection Map & Regulations for Zoning, 5th sentence, correct “Ms.” Sabin to “Mr.” Sabin and replace “Sam of the Housatonic Valley Association” with “Sam Sabin”.

MOTION: To accept the November 4, 2015 minutes as amended. By Ms. Frank, seconded by Ms. Quackenbos, passed 5 to 0.

Low Impact Development Sean Hayden on November 17, 2015, 7:00 PM – Report

A group of organizations in Washington co-sponsored a land-use related community event on November 17, 2015 with a presentation by Mr. Sean Hayden, a Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control and a Connecticut Certified Soil Scientist.  Sean’s slide talk identified important ecological issues and provided case study examples of best practices where development takes place close to sensitive natural systems.

The Conservation Commission members that attended reported that there was a large turnout and that it was well received. Ms. Payne asked if there were handouts and there were none.

Ms. Frank printed out a PDF file for a document that was referenced at the meeting. It is entitled *Rhode Island Low Impact Development Site Planning and Design Guidance Manual March 2011*. A portion of the document was distributed at this meeting. Ms. Frank’s opinion was that it covered important areas that relate to our town. While referring to this document, Ms. Frank expressed her opinion that it might be an answer to Washington’s Ridgeline Zoning. This is a recognized standard in development in many states. She said that the key here is how you treat the land in a development and thinks this is a better way to look at it. Mr. Bernard suggested checking with Sean Hayden to see how he is progressing with his regulations and mentioned that it could take as long as two years. Ms. Payne asked if someone would check into finding the Connecticut statute. Ms. Frank will handle. The clerk will print out the remaining pages of the Rhode Island Low Impact Development document and distribute at the January 6, 2015 meeting.

Lake Environmental Issues – Susan Payne

Ms. Payne asked if any members get the notices on what’s going on with the volume of requests for permits at the lake. The volume is quite extensive at the present time. There have been meetings with Richard Kleinberg (Board Member of the Lake Waramaug Association), The Washington Zoning and Washington Inland Wetlands Commissions. The objective is to create awareness about the dramatic changes that are occurring along the lake edge of these properties. Mr. Kleinberg commented that in his estimation site visits are not being scheduled when they are really necessary.

Walker Brook Culvert Project – Randy Bernard

There was a site visit by the engineers November 27, 2015. Mr. Bernard said that the important issue was whether or not they were going to mark the trees to be saved and mark those to be cut down. If too many trees were cut down the area would no longer be a cold thermal refuge. Historical maps dating around the 1850’s called the stream Trout Brook. Ms. Quackenbos said she thought it interesting that Sean Hayden brought up the subject on the amount of streams that are considered impaired. In her opinion, she said this is important enough to have further discussions. Mr. Bernard then said that Walker Brook is impaired and then mentioned several other examples of impaired waters in the state. He asked Ms. Quackenbos if she thought it would be a good idea for Washington to have a list of impaired waters. Members agreed that it is a good idea. The Town of Washington needs to understand what the DEP has classified as an impaired water here. The DEP has its own procedures and lists which they submit to Congress and the EPA. The DEP has to adhere to Federal Standards.

Wood Burning Furnace Meeting November 23, 2015 – Linda Frank

Ms. Frank attended a meeting on November 23, 2015 which focused on the health dangers from outdoor wood burning furnaces. Ms. Patricia Taylor, the Deputy Outreach Director of the Environment and Human Health Inc. out of New Haven was the speaker. Currently, a permit IS required. An applicant has to have a topographical study done which is very costly. The commissioners commented several of the problems with these outdoor furnaces, an important one being all the pollution that is thrown out by these furnaces. It’s not the smoke but the particles that are emitted are a health hazard. Bottom line is that these outdoor furnaces are not efficient burning systems. Ms. Frank subsequently spoke to Suzanne Von Holt, the Washington Town Sanitarian. She knows of two furnaces in town - the one on the Averill Farms and one on Shearer Road. The Averill Farm furnace is very high and far away from other houses so there is no problem there. Ms. Von Holt a home on Shearer Road which has an outdoor furnace.

She tested it, watched how wind affected it and then determined that there was no problem. The discussion continued amongst the members.

2016 Meeting Schedule and Board Reappointments – Susan Payne

Alternate Ann Quackenbos and Member Randy Bernard have agreed to continue for another three (3) years to January 1, 2019. Selectman Mark Lyon will reappoint both.

Other Business

The Washington Planning Commission received an application from Timothy and Stephanie Ingrassia, 63 Whittlesey Road, New Preston CT for a 6-Lot Subdivision to be located at

292 Bee Brook Road (CT Route 47). On December 2, 2015 The Planning Commission requested comments from The Conservation Commission regarding the applicant’s proposal and the applicant’s request to pay a fee in lieu of the open space requirement.

Commission members reviewed the application and forms submitted by The Planning Commission. A lengthy discussion ensued. The outcome was that the Conservation Commission was unable to respond to Planning because the Open Space set aside was not provided and there was no indication of what might be offered as set asides. Commission members did not know the formula for calculating a $ fee in lieu of a set aside. Ms. Payne will contact Land Use Administrator Janet Hill for a print out of the “equivalent area” calculations. Members agreed to continue discussion on this application at the January 6, 2016 meeting.

As there was no further business to discuss, Ms. Payne adjourned the meeting at 6:30 PM.

Submitted subject to approval,

Janice Roberti, Conservation Commission Clerk

December 9, 2015