**Town of Washington**

**Bryan Memorial Town Hall**

**Washington Depot, CT 06794**

####  Washington Conservation Commission

Minutes February 3, 2016

 5:00 PM Upper Level Meeting Room

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

Members Absent: Diane Dupuis

Alternates Present: Ann Quackenbos, Betsy Corrigan

Alternates Absent: Dirk Sabin

Staff Present: Janice Roberti

Guests: Gail and Brian Fernandez, Washington CT

Ms. Payne called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

**Consideration of the Minutes**

The members considered the regular meeting minutes of the Conservation Commission for January 6, 2016.

MOTION: To accept the January 6, 2016 minutes as written. By Ms. Frank, seconded by Mr. Bernard and passed 5 to 0.

**Scenic Road Proposal for RT 109**

Guests Brian and Gail Fernandez of Sabbaday Lane were present and provided the Commission with their opinions regarding the Scenic Road Proposal for RT 109. Mr. and Mrs. Fernandez provided their opinions regarding the proposal. They discussed the culvert repair, the high speed of traffic and other issues. Ms. Payne said that the culvert repair will be discussed at a future meeting.

Ms. Payne relayed to the Commission that Mr. Howard Barnet sent her an email on

January 27, 2016 listing what will be submitted in the package with the application and provided copies to the members.

* Scenic Road Application for Washington Conservation Commission
* Blackville Road – Blackville History
* Blackville Road Photo Album
* Blackville Road Historic Barn State Registry

**Follow-up with Mark Lyon**

 Dam at Lake Waramaug – Outcome of January 21, 2016 Meeting

Ms. Payne informed the members that the dam funding was passed.

DOT broken bridge at New Preston Falls

Selectman Lyon is pursuing this.

Beautification of Bryan Memorial Plaza – Meeting February 1, 2016

Ms. Payne attended this meeting. The Beautification Project is in its conceptual stages right now. The Town reviewed the 2005 Eco study. The consultants have been asked to come back by the end of the February with more specifics. Ms. Payne was impressed by the consultant’s presentation. One of the requests and concerns discussed at the meeting was keeping the general public more aware of what is going on as the project.

**Ingrassia 6-Lot Subdivision**

Members reviewed Engineer Brian Neff’s August 14, 2015 Site Plan and written recommendation by Mr. Mark Picton, Land Use and Environmental Consultant. Members decided that Conservation wants a set aside and not a fee. The two main requests by Conservation are 1) to protect the Bee Brook corridor on the eastern side of Bee Brook and

2) to protect the northeast corner wetlands. The desired set aside was calculated which amounted to approximately 7.5 acres.

MOTION: For the Conservation Commission to recommend to the Planning Commission an open space set aside in lieu of a fee on the Ingrassia 6-lot subdivision. The open space set aside easement should protect the Bee Brook corridor on the eastern side of Bee Brook for the length of the sub division. Conservation requests that the northeast corner wetlands of Lot #1 be protected as part of the overall set aside, approximately 7.5 acres or 15% per the Planning regulations. By: Ms. Frank, seconded by Ms. Payne and passed 5 to 0.

**Town Streetlights Project**

Selectman Lyon met with Eversource representatives on January 20, 2016 regarding a program offered by Eversource whereby a town purchases the streetlights and pays the utilities. Once a town owns the lights, it is eligible for LED conversion incentives. After purchase, the town must contract for maintenance. Towns that have taken advantage of this program have seen considerable savings. The LED conversion and subsequent energy savings are a future benefit of owning the lights. Eversource is working on a five-year plan which will convert all their lights to LED . Mr. Lyon has applied to have Washington participate in a pilot program on a trial basis in which our town designates a block of 50 streetlights for a free conversion to LED. Mr. Lyon wants to form a small committee which would include Conservation, Public Safety, the Highway Department and Board of Selectmen. Ms. Quackenbos and Ms. Frank will work on the committee which will investigate the necessity of maintaining all or some of our lights before going forward with the pilot program.

**Continuing LID discussion and research – Linda Frank, Phil Markert**

Ms. Frank sent hard copies of the drawing and written work by Dirk Sabin entitled “*View Shed Thinning, An Approach to Preserve Ridgelines While Creating More Interesting Views*” to

Tom McGowan and to Steven Trinkaus. Ms. Frank hand delivered it to Selectman Lyon.

**Lake environmental issues and continuing concerns – Linda Frank, Ann Quackenbos**

Ms. Payne stated that in reading the Inland Wetlands and ZBA reports, there are concerns about what is happening with all the development and expansion around the lake. Mr. Markert brought up previous conversations about airplanes landing on the lake and Mr. Frank commented that this is still a work in progress by the Lake Waramaug Association.

Ms. Quackenbos updated the Commission on current lake building projects. There are currently eight projects nearing completion going from the Town Beach to the Waramaug Country Club (approximately three miles). About six are within one mile. Many of them are houses that are remaining on the same footprint but are adding a full second story. The reason why these residents go to Land Use is because the lots are small (usually around 1 acre lots) and they are requesting variances. There are two news houses partially built, two or three others that haven’t started yet but they too are seeking variances to put on a second story. The discussion then turned to the loss of trees and the replanting. The Association has retained an attorney and engineer who will provide expert opinions. Members agreed that this is critical and a good idea because when residents present information, the Association has something substantial to stand on. They can then present these opinions to Inland Wetlands & Zoning.

**Impaired Water List for Washington CT – Ann Quackenbos**

To be discussed at the March 2, 2016 meeting.

**Highlands Protection Fund – Is Washington in this region?**

Ms. Payne received news that there is $3 million ear marked for CT Highlands through the Highlands Protection Fund. Ms. Payne was told that there is a corner of CT that is in the region. She asked the members if there were any thoughts on this; is there anything that Conservation can think of regarding needs in Washington? It was mentioned that the HVA received a grant from this fund.

The Highlands Protection Fund’s website shows the names of the towns that fall within this region.

**2016 Management Plan – Betsy Corrigan**

Ms. Corrigan is researching field management for pollinators. One of the books she is reading is published by the Xerces Society which is one of the top organizations devoted to the protection of insects. There is a lot of potential in the New Preston Open Space because there is a high plant diversity.

**Major Phragmites Infestation – Randy Bernard**

The next step regarding All Habitat and the eradication of phragmites is to go before Wetlands. The budgetary aspect has been finalized. An ongoing issue is that there will be continued phragmites maintenance and eradication. All Habitat states that they will follow the town line. There are neighbors who have an infestation in a part of this area. These residents will be notified and will be included in discussions. The eradication process is a cutting and then a reapplication in the fall. It is an ongoing effort in that it is killed, it grows again and it is killed again. The follow up is vital. Steep Rock has done its own follow up with spot applications using their own machinery.

**Economic Development – Phil Markert**

Mr. Markert reported on his current observations. He noticed a pattern in that there are some business owners who are getting on in age. Their businesses have been shrinking over the years and these owners will ultimately retire. There are a few owners that are young, energetic and upbeat and they are focusing on people around the lake. These younger owners accomplish this in such a way to make it attractive to people who don’t mind paying higher prices. Younger couples are anxious to improve their businesses by either adding catering, expansion or other means. Mr. Markert expressed his opinion that towns tend go through cycles and Washington is in a cycle currently with an aging business population.

Submitted subject to approval,

Janice Roberti, Conservation Commission Clerk