Conservation Commission

MINUTES

May 6, 2015

5:00 p.m. Upper Level Meeting Room

MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan Payne, Linda Frank, Diane Dupuis,

Randy Bernard

MEMBERS ABSENT: Phil Markert

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Ann Quackenbos, Dirk Sabin

ALTERNATES ABSENT: Betsy Corrigan

STAFF PRESENT: Janice Roberti

Ms. Payne called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM and seated members Linda Frank, Diane Dupuis and Randy Bernard.

Consideration of the minutes

MOTION: To accept the April 1, 2015 meeting minutes as written. By Ms. Frank, seconded by Mr. Bernard, passed 3 to 0.

Other Business

110 Calhoun Street/Kleine and Michelleto Invasives Removal

Ms. Payne introduced Paul Szymanski who is representing Robert Michelleto and Brigitte Kleine, 110 Calhoun Street. Ms. Payne explained that this was too late to post on the agenda. Mr. Szymanski displayed a map entitled “Existing Conditions Topographic and Proposed Restoration Map” dated April 6, 2015. He displayed areas on the map where the invasives would be removed and said they would be removed by hand and brushed with Roundup. Mr. Bernard told the Commission and Mr. Szymanski that Roundup had been upgraded to a carcinogen. Mr. Szymanski will tell the crew to use an organic herbicide instead. He displayed the proposed planting plan and said that native plants will be used. Ms. Payne asked that the Commission be notified when the work starts.

MOTION: To approve invasive species removal at the residence of Brigitte Kleine and Robert Micheletto, 110 Calhoun Street with the opportunity for the Commission to make one or two site visits with an update in the fall. By Ms. Frank, seconded by Ms. Dupuis and passed 3 to 0.

Horizon Line Protection

Ms. Payne asked Ms. Frank if she had anything new to discuss re the Horizon Line Project. Ms. Frank said that things were coming together and summarized from previous discussions that monitoring slopes can be done with relative ease while the opinion of what a vista is varies which makes it much more difficult. Ms. Frank said that in her opinion what really matters is the protection of the environment. Ms. Frank said that Washington will not be going to the expense of establishing a program like Kent has. It’s a huge expense both to initiate and to enforce.

Walker Brook Degradation Advisory Plan – Further Update

Mr. Bernard distributed copies of the study he participated in – *Summary & Results of Walker Brook Road Salt Study*. The purpose of the study is try to understand the issues that Walker Brook has. It was such a tough winter with continuous salt being laid on the roads over and over. With that in mind, it presented a good opportunity to take a look at how badly this can affect the brook.

5:20 Ms. Quackenbos arrives

Mr. Bernard waited for the first thaw and put a continuous monitoring device into the brook. This device provides a continuous readout for a period of a week. He reported on the grab samples taken from the brook and included samples from the Shepaug River. Chlorides in Walker Brook are significantly higher than in the Shepaug. It is important to find the best way to design the road to minimize the toxicity of runoff and its impact on the fish. Heavy rain has an impact because it carries a lot of sand and gravel. On the other hand, the chlorides are well diluted in heavy rain. Acute toxicity will kill baby fish in an hour and chronic toxicity’s average is four days and kills approximately 50% of the babies. The issue becomes locating where this runoff enters the brook and how to manage the runoff in a way that allows dilution immediately.

In conclusion, where does this leave us? One of the suggestions made was to invite Kevin Smith, Washington’s Highway Director to a future meeting. Ms. Payne will contact Mr. Smith and make arrangements.

New Preston Open Space/Control of Invasives

Betsy Corrigan informed Ms. Payne that she will be marking the invasive shrubs to be eradicated. Ms. Corrigan was not present at this meeting.

New Preston Falls Update

Mr. Bernard provided Ms. Payne the name of his business contact in New Preston to inquire about the New Preston Nights gatherings and the shop keeper sidewalk sale days. Bill Seitz of J. Seitz & Company is his contact and Mr. Bernard will reach out to him to see if he can get further information and dates.

5:30 Mr. Sabin arrives

Easement Meeting Review

Ms. Payne summarized the 4/29/15 meeting she had with Mark Lyon, Mike Ajello, Janet Hill and Linda Frank regarding Town of Washington Conservation Easements. Topics discussed included land transfers, easement violation enforcement, the assessor’s new software and its capabilities, the transfer of the monitoring responsibility from Conservation to Land Use in 2016.

As there was no further business to discuss, Ms. Payne adjourned the meeting at 5:55 PM.

FILED SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Roberti

Conservation Commission Clerk