**Washington Conservation Commission**

Minutes

June 6, 2015

5:00 PM Upper Level Meeting Room

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

Members Absent: Diane Dupuis

Alternates Present: Betsy Corrigan

Alternates Absent: Dirk Sabin, Ann Quackenbos

Staff Present: Janice Roberti

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

Consideration of the minutes

The Commission considered the regular meeting minutes for May 6, 2015.

Correction: Page 2, Under Walker Brook Degradation Plan Update, 1st paragraph, last sentence should read “With that in mind, it presented a good opportunity to take a look at how badly salt affects the brook.”

MOTION: To accept the May 6, 2015 minutes as amended. By Ms. Frank, seconded by

Mr. Bernard, passed by 4-0 vote.

Horizon Line Protection Map & Regulations for Zoning Discussion

Ms. Frank met with Nick Solley June 2, 2015. Ms. Frank reassessed ridgeline zoning because establishing ridgeline is too complicated, too expensive. Mr. Solley agrees that this is a very nice simple way to approach it. As an example, if someone is “x” number of feet within the building envelope, perhaps you can cut down in the beginning and anything else has to be supervised.

Mr. Solley stated that if they’re building on a 15% slope everything has to be screened in the beginning. Ms. Frank said more language will be coming from Dirk Sabin. The question came up about how much power the commission has in terms of telling residents what trees they can chop down. If the focus of the regulations stress keeping the rural character, tree preservation and water conservation, it’s a positive thing. The Conservation Commission should stress the importance of preserving trees based on environmental reasons. Trees help maintain water quality and control excessive runoff and erosion. Someone needs to go out to a site and see how much can be cleared. It was mentioned that perhaps slopes could be measured by the Zoning Enforcement Officer. The officer could monitor areas in terms of slope with relative ease because opinions of what a vista is varies and makes monitoring more difficult.

5:06 PM - Phil Markert arrives

Gunnery Athletic Fields Site Visit May 6, 2015

Members present for the visit were Susan Payne, Randy Bernard, Diane Dupuis, Dirk Sabin and Ann Quackenbos. Ms. Payne summarized the visit. In a letter directed to

Mr. Bill Zekas, Business Manager at the Gunnery, Ms. Payne provided the Conservation Commission’s recommendations to the Gunnery:

* Permeable surfaces be used for the parking areas and any access driveways on level surfaces and that are not yet paved.
* Monitor and record the water usage by installing a meter to measure the water used for the irrigation of the fields.
* Report to the Washington town commissions on the maintenance of the sediment basins/level spreaders and the need to remove sediment buildup over time (not just for

2 years after the fields are completed).

* Plant evergreens at the property’s northeastern edge above the yellow house adjacent to the old Gunnery hockey ponds on Route 47.
* Plant native shrubs along the macadam driveway from South Street to “disguise” the black chain link fence.
* Notify the town commissions and provide a traffic plan should the planned use of the fields change to include varsity teams or summer camps.
* Report to the Washington town commissions on any changes to the turf management plan and the use of fertilizer/herbicides.

Ms. Payne stated in the letter that most importantly the Conservation Commissions hopes for ongoing monitoring of the site beyond the two years after completion and would appreciate receiving regular monitoring reports, at a minimum, in the spring and in the fall. Ms. Payne read a memo sent to her from Dirk Sabin with his comments and the commissioners agreed that no addendum to Ms. Payne’s letter to the Gunnery was necessary.

Walker Brook Update

Mr. Bernard told the Commission that a resident has an application with Washington Inland Wetlands to redo a reinforcement of Walker Brook. That really contaminated runoff comes down right near the intersection of Hartwell Road and Walker Brook, goes into a pipe that goes under the road, comes out right where you would expect it to come out and then and then a point discharge into Walker Brook. Using a level spreader would help to spread that runoff out so it wouldn’t be a point discharge and wouldn’t go into just one part of the brook. At the end of the discharge point, the discharge would spread out, be slowed down and be distributed into a bigger area. It’s not a remedy for chlorides though. At his last visit, Mr. Bernard said that the chloride level was 3 or 4 times the toxicity level for aquatic life.

New Preston Open Space/New Preston Falls

Betsy Corrigan reported that she has a small crew out there and Ms. Payne commented that the area looks good. She is also working on the botanical inventory in the little section of woods where beavers took down the willow. That area is botanically rich. Ms. Corrigan’s suggestion is to keep a trail around the periphery of everything and not go through the woods because that causes disturbance. She described the area looking like a small nature preserve and a great bird sanctuary. The bird diversity is amazing because of the combination of the different vegetation. Regarding the invasives removal project, it is going to take time with work continuing over the years. Ms. Payne added that she will contact Bill Seitz, New Preston business owner, and find out when there will be a New Preston event and make plans for Conservation to be there.

Mr. Bernard mentioned that Steep Rock received a complaint that Bee Brook was being dammed on the upstream side and that this is threatening his property. Beavers have built a dam that is probably around 200 yards long and it has created a pond that must be 10 or 15 acres. About 5 feet of this is on Steep Rock property and approximately 300 ft. on this resident’s property. He passed around photos of the area. Mr. Bernard met with beaver trappers at the area and was told that the state will not let them move the beavers because doing so would just create another problem somewhere else. Steep Rock is not going to move forward on this. The resident will handle his situation.

Sustainability Subcommittee TPOCD – Volunteers

Ms. Payne asked the members for volunteers. At this time, there were none. The Planning Chair Person, Sarah Gager, will provide updates regarding the committee activity and Ms. Payne will approach the commissioners again.

Knotweed Update

Ms. Payne displayed a map to members and updated the group. Knotweed eradication is in the 3rd year of treatment. It’s been quite effective. The biggest challenge is to get the town to mow and Ms. Payne will stay on top of this and continue to follow up with the town.

Cell Tower Update

Mr. Markert asked if the town was collecting rent on the tower. Ms. Payne suggested contacting Selectman Mark Lyon for verification and then get back to the commission to let them know. There is still no cell service.

132 Calhoun Street – Pillow Property

Ms. Payne asked Mr. Markert how the Pillow property looked now that the Pool House was built. Mr. Markert said it looks ok. Ms. Frank told the members that if you look at the property on the NY side where the easement is, you can see the slope of the land. There is now a dirt and stone platform where the house will be built. The platform is composed of huge boulders and a lot of big stones and built for that purpose. Large excavating machines are located on the site. Architect, Rod Pleasants was able to get the level of the house down about ten feet lower than originally planned. The next building to be built will be at the very bottom and not visible from the road.

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

FILED SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Roberti

Conservation Commission Clerk