

# January 3, 2007

**Present:** Susan Payne, Linda Frank

**Alternates:** Betsy Corrigan, Dan Sherr

**Guests:** Bill Fairbairn, Linda Heslin, Ken Cornet, public & press

Susan Payne Chairperson called the meeting to order at 5:10pm.

Alternate Dan Sherr was seated.

**Motion: Linda Frank made a motion to accept the minutes of the December 6, 2006 meeting of the Washington Conservation Commission with the following corrections: on page 3, under Other Business, the second and third lines should read: *Ms. Payne also noted that she read in a Gunnery mailing, a proposal for two new athletic fields and three family residences for the South Street property. As of yet no environmental class room has been built.*, Dan Sherr seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

**Motion: Dan Sherr made a motion to elect Susan Payne Chairperson of the Washington Conservation Commission, Linda Frank seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

**Motion: Susan Payne made a motion to elect Kelly Boling Vice-Chairman of the Conservation Commission, Dan Sherr seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

## **Referrals or new projects**

**Former Glantz Property/Route 202:** no one present to have discussion

**Pappas Offer/159 Litchfield Turnpike:** Susan Payne began by saying that this property is located opposite Rabbit Hill Road on Route 202, in 1987 Zoning approved a 48 unit development, which was challenged in court and the project never happened. In a letter dated November 11, 2006 Susan informed the First Selectman about this property which is 45 acres for \$1,500,000.00. Ms. Payne went on to say that it behooves the Town to look at other properties that are available. Susan Payne and Chick Treadway met with Mr. Pappas and visited the site, she sees the possibilities for affordable housing and open space with public access. Ms. Payne offered a map of the site and went on to say anyone can investigate further, there is a Zoning file in the Land Use office (the project was titled "Woodland Hills").

Susan Payne had information on another parcel for sale at 292 Bee Brook Road, which is 52 acres for 1,250,000.00, for further investigation anyone can contact April Crumrine at Sotheby's International Realty.

Ms. Payne also had the following information on houses in Washington: there are (8) houses listed for between \$250,000.00 - \$350,000.00 and (3) houses have sold for under \$350,000.00.

Linda Frank questioned Bill Fairbairn on the moderate income housing, is there a limit on how much profit the owner can make when selling these properties and is there a demand for this type of housing. Mr. Fairbairn answered that there is a limit on profit which is set by the CPI and it is his experience in other towns that when these units become available they go fast.

The last property information that Susan Payne shared with members was a parcel owned by the Kunhardt Trust, 105 acres for \$1,675,000.00 on Nettleton Hollow Road.

Ms. Payne went on to say that she feels the Open Space Committee should be looking at these parcels. Dan Sherr asked for clarification of the Open Space Committee's job. Ms. Payne read from the Washington 2003 Plan of Conservation & Development section 3-6 "Open Space Plan Implementation" saying that the following charges have been met: establish permanent Open Space Committee, adopt open space priorities and goals, establish open space funding mechanism, the following need to be done: prepare an Open Space Action Plan to achieve goals and implementation of the Open Space Action Plan.

**Potter Farm:** Susan Payne reports that this proposition is moving through informational meetings. Ms. Payne stated that at the meeting in Marbledale the decision of the Conservation Commission to not allocate funds from the Open Space Fund was omitted from the meeting. Susan presented a map given to her by Bill Fairbairn showing fixed building lots on the Potter Farm Proposal. Betsy Corrigan expressed concern with preserving the biodiversity and felt there is a need to look into the value of what exists on the property. Mr. Fairbairn spoke about the idea of "cluster housing" noting that there was sensitivity with the neighbors and went on to say that development is a reality, this is a chance for the Town to control development.

**Boat Launch:** Dan Sherr distributed a two page informational document about his findings on the Heritage Lake Act in response to concerns raised at last months meeting by Valerie Andersen. Mr. Sherr began by stating that the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) owns the lakes and waterways of Connecticut and they are mandated to provide public access to them. Dan went on to say that the Heritage Lake Program was enacted by PA 99-135 in 1999 and that Lake Waramaug became the first Heritage Lake in September of 2000. The Heritage Lake Act provides for environmental protect of the lake, public boating access and fair representation for multiply communities bordering the lake. Dan's closing statement was: In short, the Heritage Lake Act appears to have worked well in delivering its intended purpose of "environmental preservation" for Lake Waramaug. Pam Osborne, secretary will forward a copy of Dan's document to Valerie Andersen. Linda Heslin, a resident of New Preston asked about limiting the horse power of boats on the lake. Linda Frank addressed this question by saying that there are three towns on the lake and it is a long process to get limitations passed, this is not a popular or easy process. Linda went on to say that most of the problems on the lake are not caused by boaters, but are the invasive weed problem. Ken Cornet asked why the state won't inspect boats and went on to ask about a plan by the DEP to buy and install a boat ramp in 1997 on the "old casino property". Mr. Cornet also expressed concerns for the future of the town beach. Linda Frank stated that the State of Connecticut is slow to protect its lakes. Susan Payne reminded those present that the Conservation Commission's role is advisory and that the boat launch application will be heard at the January 22nd Zoning Commission meeting. The boat launch application has received approval from the Inland Wetlands Commission.

### **Subcommittee Reports**

**Land Use Data Management:** Dan Sherr stated that Kelly Boling and he will define the needs and report back.

**Cell Tower Update:** There is no new information on the proposed towers in New Preston on the Underwood or Waldron properties. Susan Payne asked about the removal of pay phones from the town. First Selectman Dick Sears stated that the phone companies are removing them. Mr. Sears went on to say that the Town of Washington has keep phones in the Depot Plaza, the pavilion at Washington Primary School, an emergency phone at the Bee Brook Firehouse and a cutesy phone in the Town Hall.

**Greenway:** An A-2 survey is being done on the Riverfront property "old town garage site". Susan Payne stated that her Greenway Committee would like to be involved in this project, she would like to keep the walking trail as a link from Hidden Valley to Steep Rock.

**Management and Monitoring:** Linda Frank reports that monitoring is almost complete.

**Open Space Committee:** Dan Sherr expects to meet on January 17th, items on the agenda will include an action plan and looking at properties.

**Scenic Road:** Susan Payne believes Couch Road is coming up for Scenic designation.

**Other Business**

Susan Payne submitted an article entitled "Using Limited Development to Conserve Land and Natural Resources" to the file.

**Motion: Linda Frank made a motion to adjourn at 6:10pm; Dan Sherr seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

**Next scheduled meeting of the Conservation Commission is February 7, 2007 at 5:00pm.**

Submitted subject to approval,

Pamela L. Osborne, Secretary