

October 4, 2006

Present: Chairperson Susan Payne, Kelly Boling

Alternates: Elizabeth Corrigan, Diane Dupuis, Daniel Sherr

Guests: Dick Sears First Selectman

Chairperson Susan Payne called the meeting to order at 4:10pm.

Seating of Alternates: Elizabeth Corrigan and Diane Dupuis were seated as alternate members.

Referrals or new projects: There were no new referrals. Susan Payne had spoken with Mike Ajello about the Conservation Commission being part of the application process in their advisory capacity, to help and advise applicants. Kelly Boling agreed that the Conservation Commission could make useful recommendations and made the following motion.

MOTION: Kelly Boling made a motion to request the Zoning Commission put into its regulations as part of their application process that applicants are encouraged to have an informal preliminary discussion with the Conservation Commission prior to the development of a site, Diane Dupuis seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

There was continued discussion as to whether members should include the Planning Commission and Inland Wetlands Commission in the motion as well. Members agreed that the Planning Commission should be included, but decided against asking the same of the Inland Wetlands Commission.

MOTION: Kelly Boling made a motion to amend the prior motion by added the Planning Commission to the request, seconded by Diane Dupuis passed unanimously.

Susan Payne reminded all members that they should be reviewing applications on file in the Land Use offices.

Dan Sherr arrived at 4:15pm.

MOTION: to accept the minutes of the September 6, 2006 meeting of the Washington Conservation Commission as submitted was made by Dan Sherr, seconded by Kelly Boling passed unanimously.

Susan Payne informed members of the upcoming events:

October 18th - It's All About Connecting the Lots - Washington Open Space Committee Meeting @5:00pm

October 26th - A Forum on the Future of our Rural Landscape - Falls Village Senior Center @ 7:30pm.

November 13th - Biodiversity Conservation in Connecticut Towns - Washington Town Hall @ 6:45pm

Ms. Payne also reminded members of the upcoming renovations to the Town's Beach and Boat Launch area.

MOTION: at 4:20pm Susan Payne made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss potential municipal property transfer activity, Dan Sherr seconded the motion which passed

unanimously.

MOTION: at 4:55pm Susan Payne made a motion to come out of Executive Session, Dan Sherr seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

MOTION: Dan Sherr made a motion to accept the recommendation from the Open Space Committee meeting of September 20, 2006, Diane Dupuis seconded the motion, which failed by a vote of 1-in favor, 3-opposed and 1-abstention.

Kelly Boling asked members if the Conservation Commission would be in favor of the project if the Town acted as the development authority. Members felt that without using the Open Space Fund, with a conservation plan and maintaining the rural character of the road it seemed like a good idea

First Selectman Dick Sears arrived at 5:00pm.

Susan Payne informed Mr. Sears of the negative vote taken by the Conservation Commission on the recommendation from the Open Space Committee. Mr. Sears was disappointed that the Conservation Commission did not support the project. Susan Payne summarized the points made and reasons for failure of the recommendation, the Conservation Commission doesn't see the project as a Conservation project, it's not protecting agriculture because the farm will be gone, the floating building envelopes, the parcel was not a priority on the Open Space maps and the feeling that the proposal is a development project. Susan went on to say that the Conservation Commission supports the Affordable Housing aspect of the project and would support the Town if it were to take on the entire project as a development project. Ms. Payne closed by saying that she felt this was not an appropriate precedent for the Town to take given the other farming properties on the market and others that may be coming on the market. Dick Sears asked for understanding between Conservation/Open Space priorities and the reality of what comes up and is available. Mr. Sears went on to reference the Moore parcel in New Preston, stating that there is no one perfect parcel for any one commission and opportunities will arise that are complex and need to be looked at from a variety of ways. Mr. Sears struggled to understand the Conservation Commissions decision and went on to speak about the 30% goal of permanently preserved open space in Washington. He stated that the proposed project would add 78 acres to this goal. Several members of the Conservation Commission defended their decision sighting work done in the Open Space Plan, information from the 2003 Plan of Conservation and Development and work done by the Open Space Inventory Committee. Susan Payne referenced the evaluating process for properties and justification for conservation value. This proposal would not allow for public access, no valuable wildlife habitat, it's a disturbed area with invasive species and will have floating building envelopes. Members reiterated that as the proposal exists it is not a good project for conservation but the affordable housing piece is great. There was continued discussion.

Subcommittee Reports

Open Space Committee: Dan Sherr stated that at the October 18th meeting there will be a presentation by Tim Abbott on the Greenprint Project. All Land Use committee members are invited.

Greenway: will meet again in January

Other Business

Kelly Boling stated that he has sent a draft to David Owen, Zoning Commission Chairman about lighting regulations.

There was brief discussion on the discontinuation of part of Frisbie Road, which took place at the October 3rd Selectman's meeting.

Adjourned at 5:35pm.

Next scheduled meeting of the Conservation Commission is November 1, 2006 at 5:00pm.

Submitted subject to approval,

Pamela L. Osborne, Secretary