

December 1, 2004

Present: Susan Payne, Chairperson, Elizabeth Corrigan, Joe Gitterman, Phillip Markert

Alternates: Linda Frank, Dan Sherr

Guests: Dick Sears, First Selectman, Press

Members are asked to email (conservation@washingtonct.org) or call (868-0423) Pam if you can not attend.

Susan Payne Chairperson called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

Alternate Dan Sherr was seated.

MOTION: Approval of the minutes from the November 3, 2004 meeting of the Washington Conservation Commission, Joe Gitterman made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 3rd meeting, Dan Sherr seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Referrals from other commissions:

Status of Walker Brook development proposal: Susan Payne reports that the Mayor of the town of New Milford is asking for a King Mark environmental study on the property, Washington is co-signing this request.

Holly Hill Farm, 87 Whittlesey Road: Susan Payne and Betsy Corrigan did a site visit of this property. Betsy Corrigan has spent time in the Land Use Office going over the extensive planting plan, she is concerned with the proposed plan because they are landscaping right up to the river. Linda Frank inquired as to what is existing on the site; Ms. Corrigan replied a lot of lawn. Ms. Corrigan continued that she is concerned about removal of the natural buffer; there is already a lot of erosion going on. Ms. Frank asked if there were any plans for terracing, this would help the erosion. The answer was no, not in the pending proposal. The area near the river is historically a picnic area. Mr. Sherr confirmed that there are regulations to protect the area but that it is not off limits. Ms. Corrigan's concerns are that there is already a walking path parallel to the slope which breaks the first rule of landscaping; she feels this area needs regular monitoring. Susan Payne checked with Mike Ajello, Wetlands Enforcement Officer about specific regulations dealing with the Shepaug and Bantam Rivers. Zoning Regulation 12.1.3 addresses the issue of no excavation within 200 feet of the Shepaug River. Members feel that the Inland Wetlands Commission is on top of this application, the Conservation Commission will continue to monitor. Mr. Gitterman asked what if what is proposed is better than what is there now.

Matthews, 89 Lower Church Hill Road: Susan Payne began by expressing that this is an exceptional site which looks south over Steep Rock, they are looking at blasting the ridge. Ms. Payne added that a Cease and Desist Order has been issued for this property. The Wetlands Enforcement Officer, Mike Ajello visited the site today with Lucy Ann Lavin of the Institute For American Indian Studies, she is going to contact the state Archeologist, and Ms. Payne expects a visit from the State Archeologist by the end of the week. This property has an application before the Zoning Commission. Ms. Corrigan added that two DEP sensitive areas converge on this property and the ridge formations are extensive and deep, they are terraced. Susan Payne will ask for a balloon test be done for the house site.

Stiteler-Giddins, 198 Tinker Hill Road: This application is for a resubdivision of the property. Betsy Corrigan is concerned with the lawns and fertilization which is carried downhill through the intermittent watercourses and eventually ends up in the lake. Ms. Corrigan feels the seeps need buffering. Pam Osborne will check with Planning about a site visit. The Public Hearing for this application will be

January 4th.

Beck, 129 Calhoun Street: Mr. Beck is resubmitting basically the same application that the Conservation Commission commented on at its June 2, 2004 meeting. At that time Conservation Commission members would like to see a fee-in-lieu of open space and they are still of the same opinion. This Public Hearing will also be on January 4th.

Management and Monitoring of Town properties: no new activity

Subcommittee Reports

Open Space Committee: Dan Sherr shared with members a handout to be mailed to townspeople requesting input on where money should be spent relating to the forums that were held recently on open space, housing, education, municipal/community projects and tax increases. Mr. Sherr spoke about the November 17th town meeting which was a wrap up of the forums, he mentioned that open space ranked very high, the educational aspect appears controversial and Dan added that he did not see any people present with school aged children. The challenge is to keep education from becoming separate from the town issues.

Canoe Brook: no activity

School Connection: Linda Frank has spoken to Chip Miller at Gunnery; he is hoping to visit the town owned parcel on Wykeham Road in the spring.

Cell Tower Update: Susan Payne noted that the cell tower is up at Gooseboro in Bantam.

Land Use Data Management: Linda Frank and Elisha Dyer will be working together on getting updated map information to George Blake. Linda has checked out the map recording system in the Town Clerk's vault.

Flora & Fauna: no report

Greenway: Trial Guide completion is the goal for spring.

Road Discontinuation: Susan Payne referenced Kelly Boling email that there was a concern from neighbors on Nettleton Hollow Road about the posting of a "Private Drive" sign on the section of West Mountain Road that had been discontinued. When the roads are discontinued the town retains the right to use the roadways as walking, bridle or bicycle paths and the neighbors are afraid that . Kelly Boling has submitted a draft of proposed additions to the Zoning Regulations addressing this issue. Members will discuss this at the January meeting; Dan Sherr will investigate and report back.

Scenic Road: Joe Gitterman is waiting on clarifying information on the town's ability on mandating scenic roads, what is legally doable.

Water Resources: no activity

Other Business:

MOTION: to accept the list of 2005 Meetings dates as submitted was made by Susan Payne, seconded by Linda Frank and passed unanimously.

First Selectman Dick Sears stopped by to commend the members of the Conservation Commission as

well as the Open Space Committee on behalf of the town for their monthly work and day to day commitment, a thank you for all the good work!

Ridgeline Regulations: Susan Payne spoke to Zoning Chairman Hank Martin about ridgeline regulations. Zoning has spoken about preservation of ridgelines/view sheds in the past. Ms. Payne asked Mr. Martin if the Conservation Commission could assist with collecting information. Mr. Martin cautioned Ms. Payne that regulations need to be in the interest of the public along common roadways, we cannot protect everything. Linda Frank and Phil Markert agreed to work on this project.

Meeting adjourned at 6:55pm.

Next regular scheduled meeting of the Conservation Commission is January 5, 2005 at 5:00pm.

Submitted subject to approval,

Pamela L. Osborne, Secretary