

February 1, 2006

Present: Susan Payne Chairperson, Kelly Boling, Linda Frank, Joe Gitterman

Alternates: Betsy Corrigan, Dan Sherr

Guests: Addie Roberts, Press

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

Betsy Corrigan was seated as an alternate.

Minutes of 1/4/06: Members reviewed the minutes of the January 4, 2006 meeting of the Conservation Commission and made the following amendments: on page one, in the third motion replace pass with passed, on page 2, under 33 Church Hill Road, New Milford, the third sentence to read: The subdivision is onand will not be improved upon to accommodate increased traffic flow. Under Subcommittee Reports the phrase "no activity" to be replaced with "no report" for the Open Space Committee, Archaeological Resources Protection and Scenic Roads.

Motion: Kelly Boling made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 4, 2006 meeting of the Washington Conservation Commission as amended, Joe Gitterman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Referrals or new projects:

72 Upper Church Hill Road: A letter was drafted and sent, on January 6, 2006, to the Inland Wetland Commission and Planning Commission with the Conservation Commission's comments and suggestions on the proposed subdivision. Chairperson Susan Payne received a response letter and draft copy of the proposed Conservation Restriction from Paul S. Szymanski, P.E., President of Arthur H. Howland, P.C. Ms. Payne read the letter of response to members. (on file) Betsy Corrigan will submit an application to the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection Natural Diversity Database for information on the threatened/endangered species area near the proposed subdivision. The response letter states that the applicant has revised the proposal to easement rather than restriction, Grantee being the Town of Washington. Susan Payne has read the draft of the proposed Conservation Restriction and feels it is a good document. Susan went through the pertinent parts of the draft document with members. Betsy Corrigan voiced concern about maintaining the "Yankee" type stonewalls. Addie Roberts, Planning Commission Chairperson came forward to comment on the proposal. Ms. Roberts stated that the applicant wanted to plant pines as buffers and the Planning Commission asked that they use native shrubs instead. She went on to say that it would be helpful if the Conservation Commission could provide a list of various native plants/shrubs. Susan Payne thought this was a great idea and agreed to provide the information. Betsy Corrigan is also concerned about the reserved right to remove dead, diseased or invasive trees, shrubs and plants. Ms. Corrigan felt this gives them the in to create a "New York Forest" and went on to inform members of the decline in songbirds due to encroachment of their nesting and food sources. The songbirds winter in the tropics where they are losing their habitat as well. Joe Gitterman felt that the proposed 3+ acre Conservation Restriction on the east side of the property should be connected to the other easements. Kellie Boling will draft a letter to the Planning Commission addressing the following: protection of the stonewalls/ to be rebuilt "traditionally", connecting the eastern Conservation Restriction area with the others, provide information for the road/house buffers to include native species, conservation restriction markers to be visible (GPS coordinates). The next Planning Commission meeting is Tuesday February 7th.

The Depot Study: Addie Roberts Planning Chairperson stated that the Depot Study and cover letter were

going on the Town website. Secretary, Pamela Osborne will email a copy of the cover letter to Conservation members. Susan Payne began by telling Ms. Roberts that her team did a wonderful job with this conceptual exercise, Kelly Boling added his accolades. Susan went on to state that the Conservation Commission's primary consideration is for the environment such as water resources, preservation of green space, lighting, less pavement. Addie noted that the study gave the depot more green space and less paving. Joe Gitterman stated that the plan should utilize new products such as grass pavers. Ms. Roberts continued by saying that Zoning will be addressing the parking issue and that the plan has proposed more parking with more green space. Kelly Boling felt that growth in the village centers would decrease growth outside the village centers, create desired growth areas. Linda Frank addressed the "old town garage site". Linda feels that what is there now needs to be marked; you don't want to lose anything valuable before beginning any project. Ms. Roberts said there is a need to find new space to store the materials that are stock piled on this property; the equipment is not the issue. She went on to state that preservation of the 100' river buffer is important. They had talked about allowing temporary use of this site with the town maintaining ownership for its future use, but this may be difficult. Dan Sherr asked about the Depot Study in the context of Marbledale, New Preston and the Route 202 corridor. Ms. Roberts answered that the Town Plan of Conservation and Development identifies the three town centers and suggested to preserve land, using the centers for development. The Planning Commission chose the Depot because it was largest; each town center deserves its individual look. Mr. Sherr asked if given the controversy will they concentrate on the Depot, is there a development schedule? Addie said she asked for a 50 year plan, the northwest area will change (as much as people think it will remain the same) and there is a tipping point, if no one is living in the village centers they die, they are looking for viability & location. The town needs to set priorities. There will be continued conversations at Planning Commission meetings; this will be a lengthy process. Members are asked to get their comments to Janet Hill in the Land Use Office.

Best Development Practices brochure development: Susan Payne reports that she has not heard from any other Land Use Boards (volunteering helpers) for this project. Patte Doran a member of the Open Space Committee has volunteered. Susan has received two discs with information from the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities as well as two documents from Dan McGuiness of the Northwest Conservation District. It was decided that the Conservation Commission will proceed with the work of organizing this project.

Subcommittee Reports

Open Space: Dan Sherr stated that the Open Space Committee identified five goals and discussed three subjects. The three subjects being the privilege of the open space evaluations (using them as a guideline for preservation), do they approach individuals or just do assessment and the database of the Open Space Plan. They are looking for a role in the process. Dan went on to ask what is done after identifying, should they be active in changing regulations pursuing tax abatement? Susan Payne suggested revisiting the state statues for Open Space.

Ridgeline Protection: Linda Frank reports that they have spoken to Mike Zizka Esq. who has given them feedback. Linda has also had conversations with ZEO Mike Ajello. She is trying to get information together for the March meeting.

Management and Monitoring of Town Properties: This committee will stick with fall site visits to properties.

Archaeological Resources Protection: Betsy Corrigan has emailed Bill Fairbairn and waiting for a response.

Land Use Data Management: Kelly Boling gave a demonstration of the Arc View set up for interested Land Use personnel and members today prior to this meeting.

Greenway: Their next meeting is Monday February 6th.

Scenic Road: no report

Canoe Brook: no report

Cell Tower Update: The request by Verizon to install a tower on the New Preston Firehouse property has been put on hold by Verizon.

Flora & Fauna: Betsy Corrigan has sent an email to Dan and Susan for review. She is working on a joint Conservation Commission and Washington Environmental Council task force that will be on call for eradication of invasive species. Betsy is also continuing her work on the Ecological Map and collecting information for the website.

Water Resources: no report

Natural Resource Inventory Report's recommendations for implementation: This item will be kept on the agenda for future discussion.

Other Business

Susan Payne informed members of the following upcoming events:

The Trust for Public Land and The Housatonic Valley Association will feature Tim Abbott, Director of the Litchfield Hills Greenprint on February 10, 2006 at 4:00pm. at the Fife'n Drum in Kent, RSVP is necessary.

2006 CAWS (Connecticut Association of Wetlands Scientists) annual meeting is February 23, 2006 in Meriden, registration is required.

Copies of the Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commission newsletter were circulated to members.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00pm.

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

Submitted subject to approval,

Pamela L. Osborne, Secretary