

February 14, 2008

Open Space Committee

Present: Chairperson Susan Payne, Charles LaMunier, Joann Caldara, Phil Dutton, Phil Markert

Susan Payne, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 4:50PM. She asked the members to look over the January minutes if they had not already done so.

Minutes: In looking over the minutes, Susan Payne said she would like to clarify the fact that she had invited John Boyer to come to the meeting because of the Washington Housing Trust.

Motion: Joann Caldara made a motion to accept the minutes of January 10, 2008, with an addition stating: Susan Payne asked John Boyer to attend because of the Washington Community Housing Trust. The motion was seconded by Charles LaMunier and passed unanimously.

Susan Payne reminded the members that Pam Osborne is now working for Probate and will no longer be secretary for Conservation and Open Space. Ms. Payne told the members that Pam was very touched by their thank-you.

Phil Dutton arrived at 5:00PM.

Ms. Payne said Rick Distel was out of town and she did not know if he had completed the Marbledale Historic District Survey.

Ms. Payne suggested to the members that they could discuss the Plan of Development or review Open Space possibilities.

Mr. Markert said he would like to talk about Regulations. That is, a fee in lieu of set-backs. He said some years ago he asked Andrew Rohraback for his thoughts on this. Mr. Rohraback came back with the opinion that Planning Commissions may require a developer to pay fees in lieu of providing open space subdivision regulation requirements. Mr. Markert said he has lots of info from different towns. Some towns have very strong wording. We could be a lot more demanding regarding ridge lines, historic districts, etc. Calhoun Street is getting out of hand with inappropriate buildings. We are increasingly concerned about open space. Our regulations should reflect what the town wants to do with the land. Regulations need to be explicit. Mr. LaMunier said Zoning regulations are more explicit than Inland-Wetland Regs.

The members discussed ways to keep projects from getting out of hand. Joann Caldara asked about stricter enforcement. Mr. Dutton agreed - there needs to be a way to over see projects so they don't get out of hand. Also mentioned was the suggestion to institute a schedule of fines based on the value of the property. Mr. LaMunier noted that Inland-Wetlands can only charge a max of \$1000. Any schedule of fines should be backed by a Town ordinance.

The members discussed whether they could make changes to the Regs within the existing State Statutes. Ms. Payne stated they must start with the Selectmen and get their support; then Land Use. She said the Commissions should get together once a month, because they all overlap today. It is critical to get the Chairs together once a month to meet with the First Selectman to discuss pressing issues. Ms. Payne said she would contact the First Selectman about this.

Ms. Payne adjourned the meeting at 5:50PM.

Submitted subject to approval,

Martha T. Shade, Secretary