

# February 2, 2005

**Present:** Susan Payne, Chairperson

**Alternates:** Linda Frank, Diane Dupuis, Dan Sherr

**Guests:** Joe Mustich

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

The meeting was called to order at 5:00pm.

Alternates: Linda Frank, Diane Dupuis and Dan Sherr were seated.

The Conservation Commission is down to the last (6) copies of the Natural Resource Inventory Report and Recommendations, Pam Osborne; Secretary will look into reordering the report.

Susan Payne, Chairperson asked for input from members on the 2005/2006 budget. Susan asked Dan Sherr, Chairman for the Open Space Committee if he foresaw any need for money in the upcoming budget. The Open Space Committee falls under the Conservation Commission and doesn't have its own line item in the Town's budget. Dan felt that there would be the need for some mapping work. Mapping work would be needed for qualifying parcels for open space according to criteria and also to run a simulated build out of the town. Mr. Sherr felt that \$3,500 should cover both projects. Susan Payne will talk with First Selectman Dick Sears about this request.

## **Referrals from other commissions**

There were no new referrals.

**Judson's Rock:** Susan Payne reported that the Zoning Commission denied this application without prejudice and the Washington Environmental Council submitted a letter noting its concerns with the application.

**Stiteler/Giddens Project:** Dan Sherr and Linda Frank submitted a site visit report to the Inland-Wetland Commission on this application.

Susan Payne asked members to read the other commission's minutes on line to follow up on the various applications that Conservation has been involved with.

**Review of Natural Resource Inventory Report's recommendations to select projects for implementation:** Susan Payne is hoping that Betsy Corrigan will begin work on archaeological resource preservation.

**Management and Monitoring of Town properties:** Linda Frank will do some thinking on the subject of signage on Town owned properties.

## **Subcommittee Reports**

**Open Space:** Dan Sherr submitted an article for the Town newsletter; he used information from the Open Space Plan. Dan has been recruiting new members for the Open Space Committee. Eileen Hearn has

joined, Joann Caldera has been invited to the next meeting and Dan hopes Joann will be a representative from the Real Estate piece and Charles LaMuniere has joined as an advisor, his expertise is aquifers and the protection of aquifers. Dan Sherr, Chick Treadway and Jack Field are working on regulations for tax abatement for open space, which will be submitted to the Selectman by March 1st. Linda Frank asked if there was pending legislation that will make it harder to get tax breaks on Conservation Easements. Susan Payne was aware that legislators are looking into the amount of deduction taken and the appraisals done on the properties. They may cut back on the amount of deduction and review the qualifications. Dan Sherr went on to explain that there are two types of tax abatement. One is a federal one time write off and the other is a local annual abatement. Diane Dupuis asked Dan Sherr if the Open Space Committee was pursuing bonding as a way of obtaining funds to acquire open space. Dan answered that they have not talked about bonding yet. Diane asked about the link between the Housing Diversity and Open Space Committee. She wanted clarification on comments she heard from Bill Fairbairn about bonding. Dan went on to say that the Open Space Committee would work with/help the Housing Diversity Committee find or acquire land but not with bonding. Susan Payne added that the \$300,000 budget figure was for open space only; the Open Space Committee is supportive of diversified housing but not bound to it.

**Ridgeline Protection:** Linda Frank reports that this subcommittee has been looking at and identifying ridgelines for protection. They are getting together tomorrow to write a report to be submitted to the Zoning Commission.

**Archeological Resources Protection:** no report

**Land Use Data Management:** no report

**Greenway:** This committee continues to work on their trail guide.

**Scenic Road:** The final Scenic Road Ordinance is now on the Town's website and plans are in the works to get the "How To Packet" posted on the website also.

**Canoe Brook:** All paperwork has been submitted to the State.

**School Connection:** nothing new

**Cell Tower Update:** Diane Dupuis informed members that two possible cell tower sites have been identified in Warren, the first site is at Mt. Lakes Camp off of Curtis Road and the second site is on Mt. Laurel Road which town is owned property. Washington has no legal standing in these two cases and can only communicate our view as a community. Diane will keep members posted. Dan asked Diane about the fact that companies not being obligated to remove cell towers when they become obsolete. Diane said this was true.

**Flora & Fauna:** no report

**Water Resources:** no report

## **Other Business**

Joe Mustich was present as an observer, but did mention that he had been seeking to have the "Private Drive" sign removed from the section of West Mountain Road that was recently discontinued. The Selectman have agreed to remove the sign.

Susan Payne has submitted (4) items for the town newsletter and Kelly Boling submitted information on the road discontinuation process.

Meeting adjourned at 6:15pm.

Next scheduled meeting of the Conservation Commission is March 2, 2005 at 5:00pm.

Submitted subject to approval,

Pamela L. Osborne, Secretary