

February 5, 2003

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

Alternates: Kelly Boling, Linda Frank, Dirk Sabin

Guests: Elaine Luckey, First Selectmen; Candace Korzenko, Inland Wetland Representative; Ellen Tracy, Chris Charles, Charles LaMuniere

Members are asked to call Susan Payne at home (868-9348) if they are unable to attend a meeting.

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

Kelly Boling and Linda Frank were seated as alternates.

MOTION: Approval of the minutes of the January 15, 2002 meeting of the Washington Conservation Commission, Linda Frank made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 15th meeting, with the following amendments; on page (3) under Planning Subdivision Regs & Set-Asides in the second sentences value should be replaced with value; under Canoe Brook Status Report add the sentence, "The issue of the erosion problem behind the Washington Art Association in Canoe Brook should be a top priority on the town's "wish list"; under Subcommittee Reports, Flora/Fauna, the fourth and fifth sentence should be replaced by the following: Betsy also reported that through the Northwest Conservation District she will be pursuing a regional biodiversity study, Mike Klemens, a biologist from the Metropolitan Conservation Alliance which is affiliated with the Wildlife Conservation Society, is the contact person for this study. Kelly Boling seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Budget 2003-2004

The Conservation Commission has a basic budget consisting of a clerk, education and postage. Susan Payne suggested that money be added for consulting, legal advice and monitoring. If the commission is to be responsible for monitoring open space monies will be needed to cover expenses. The town has two parcels of open space and baseline documentation for these easements needs to be done. Kelly Boling added that in the future this expense should be the applicants and not the town. Susan Payne will add a \$5000 line item in the budget for future expenses. All members agreed.

Referrals from other Commissions

Dirk Sabin presented maps for 67/69 Carmel Hill Road on the Washington/Bethlehem town line. The property is now three parcels consisting of approximately 73 acres. Dirk used the Natural Resource Inventory Report to highlight the properties natural resources such as peaks, wetlands, critical habitats and vernal pools. Betsy Corrigan submitted a letter dated January 25, 1999 from Hank J. Gruner concerning the amphibian species on this property (filed with minutes). At this time the land is listed under 490 and has deed restrictions along some of the southern boundary line. Dirk will be submitting an application to the Inland/Wetland Commission to develop two home sites; the property will be changed from three parcels to two through lot line revisions. Mr. Sabin added that based on soils and slopes there is potential for three to six lots on this property. The applicant is proposing to place 45 acres under conservation easement. They also want to construct two ponds transforming wetland habitat into open water habitat. Linda Frank asked about the pond edges, will they be wetland like? Dirk responded by saying that the bulk of the buffer will be native meadow with some grasslands for access purposes. Dirk added that there will be maintained landscapes around the houses and tennis courts.

Betsy interjected that this property is a unique habitat area and when you change the water habitat a

different type of species take over. In his plan Dirk has stayed away from the vernal pools and left the rock outcroppings in tack. Susan asked about the view from Carmel Hill, Dirk answered that only the driveways will be visible from the road the western lot will have a pervious driveway and the eastern lot may have an impervious surface to prevent ongoing erosion. Phil Markert and Linda Frank agreed that two home sites are better than more. Ms. Frank went on to say that she feels there needs to be a management plan in place to educate the new property owners. Kelly Boling agrees with Phil and Linda but is concerned with the ponds he feels he does not have enough expertise to voice opinion only a concern. Betsy is concerned about the upland review area and would like to see the project checked out by a "qualified" biologist. Ms. Corrigan felt that perhaps she should recluse herself from this application because she is a neighbor. She went on to state that she feels this is a big money project and doesn't agree with the development. Betsy read a letter she wrote dated February 4, 2003 (filed with minutes). Susan feels that maintenance is an issue with the proposed ponds there should be a management plan because of the sensitivity of the project. Ms. Payne also inquired as to the financial capability and commitment of the applicant. Mr. Sabin stated that the applicant needs two premium home sites with water; there will be large development disturbances which they hope to off set by the conservation easements. Susan added that development is a reality and feels that Dirk has presented a thoughtful application. Charles LaMuniere commented that there needs to be a site visit by the Inland/Wetland Commission, the Conservation Commission would like to be informed when the site visit will take place. Chris Charles asked Dirk about the difference in swamp and wetland. Dirk answered that a swamp is a specific type of wetland. Chris went on to comment on the following; in order to dredge the ponds or service the dry hydrant they would need access to the ponds and apply to Inland/Wetlands for activity in a regulated area. He feels there is a need to see the 100' buffer to the wetlands and it should be flagged. Mr. Charles also stated that zoning allows for 10% lot coverage but this doesn't prevent activities such as clear cutting and he's pushing for more control for the 90% that is not covered. Chris asked Dirk if at a future time the property could be subdivided. Dirk stated that that would not be possible because of the proposed conservation easements. Susan will draft a memo to the Inland/Wetland Commission stating views/opinions of the Conservation Commission.

Cell Tower Update

Phil Markert clarified the intention of the Cell Tower Subcommittee was to educate themselves about cell towers and was not to locate alternative sites. As the cell tower subcommittee's process was ongoing the applications came in for the two proposed sites. The shift of concern changed from views to health. Phil is educating himself on the health issues, trying to eliminate extremes. He will come back to the commission with information and added knowledge.

Ellen Tracy was present to thank the Conservation Commission for their help and letter. Susan read a letter of appreciation from Jean Chapin (filed with minutes). The Conservation Commission also received three letters from concerned residents about the AT&T proposal for a cell tower on Rabbit Hill Road in Warren (filed with minutes). Pam Osborne will forward copies of the letter to Janet Hill, Zoning secretary for her files.

How to accept land as the Town of Washington - no report

Land Management Discussion - tabled to next month

Map of Town Land - CE's

Pam Osborne created maps of the Town of Washington, using the Arc View program, and pinpointed town owned property.

Report from 1/28/03 Commission Chairs meeting

Susan reported that discussion centered on cell towers. The chairs will meet again on February 25th.

Collaboration with Washington Environmental Council

See water resources under subcommittee reports.

Canoe Brook Status

Linda Frank is going to pursue Nick Solley about this issue.

Subcommittee Reports:

Scenic Vistas/Roads - Joe Gitterman's subcommittee is circulating a draft of a scenic road ordinance.

Greenway - Susan Payne highlighted the minutes she submitted from the February 4th meeting.

Flora/Fauna - Betsy's subcommittee will meet on February 13th at 4:00pm at the Steep Rock office.

Water Resources - Kirby Brook Evaluation

Phil reports that samples have not yet been taken at the Kirby Brook site. Betsy inquired about adding an aquatic insect study to the water sampling. There was discussion on getting high school students involved through the senior project or community service areas. Betsy will bring in a model of a study.

New-appoint committee to create Land Use Info/Welcome Pamphlet - Candace Korzenko will represent the Inland Wetland Commission and Jane Boyer will represent the Historic District Commission.

Land Use/Town Info Pamphlets from other towns

Other Business

Kelly Boling has agreed to chair a data management subcommittee.

Privilege of the Floor

Meeting adjourned at 7:12pm.

Next scheduled meeting of the Washington Conservation Commission is at 5:00pm February 19, 2003.

Submitted subject to approval,

Pamela L. Osborne, Secretary