

February 7, 2007

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

Alternate: Diane Dupuis

Guests: First Selectman Richard Sears, Allen Aragi

Chairperson, Susan Payne called the meeting to order at 5:05pm.

Alternate Diane Dupuis was seated.

Minutes of January 3, 2007: Susan Payne made the following corrections to the minutes of the January 3, 2007 meeting: All on page 3; under Cell Tower Update, line four should read: *are removing them. Mr. Sears went on to say that the Town of Washington keeps*, line six should read: *phone at the Bee Brook Firehouse and a courtesy phone in the Town Hall*, under Other Business, line one should read: *Susan Payne submitted an article entitled "Using Limited Development to Conserve.*

Motion: Linda Frank made a motion to accept the minutes as corrected from the January 3, 2007 meeting of the Washington Conservation Commission, Diane Dupuis seconded the motion which carried 4-0 with Kelly Boling abstaining.

Subcommittee Reports

Land Use Data Management: no report

Greenway: Susan Payne reported that she has contacted Dirk Sabin who is willing to work on the River Front Walk (old Town Garage site); Susan went on to say that Bob Williams and Elisha Dyer will be involved also.

Cell Tower Update: Diane Dupuis distributed two maps which located the two proposals for cell tower locations in the New Preston/Marbledale area along the Route 202 corridor. The two proposed sites are the Underwood property on Mountain Road and the Waldron property on Route 202. Ms. Dupuis did a mock up of locations for five more towers she believes will be needed to have coverage in the Washington area. These locations were in three mile radiuses of each other (cell tower locations included existing, proposed and new), which Diane felt was what is needed for Washington coverage due to the terrain, she added that there would still be pockets without service, seamless service is not possible in Washington. Joe Gitterman questioned the three mile radius. Ms. Dupuis stated that she believes that only one of the two proposed cell towers will be built, they are both in the view shed of Route 202, but they are not in a historical district, nor are there any critical habitats in either location. Kelly Boling felt that the best thing to do is proactively promote the best site. Diane Dupuis felt that it was important to protect the public, keeping the proposed cell tower 1500' away from people. Kelly Boling questioned whether members felt that there was a conflict of interest for Joe Gitterman and himself because of their affiliation with the Myfield Project. Members felt that there was no conflict. On March 5, 2007 at 7:30pm there will be an informational meeting about the proposed cell towers, Susan Payne encouraged participation by Conservation Commission members. It was decided that Diane Dupuis will draft a letter to the Siting Council after the March 5th meeting which will voice objects to the siting of the cell tower in the scenic view shed and suggest some minimums such as driveway width and land clearing if a site must be chosen.

Allen Aragi-subdivision @9 Wilbur Road: Mr. Aragi owns the 36+ acre parcel at 9 Wilbur Road which

was the Glantz property. He is proposing an 8 lot subdivision which includes an existing house. Mr. Aragi is meeting informally with the commissions (Inland Wetlands, Zoning, Planning and Conservation) to get feedback before he submits his subdivision application. The Conservation Commission would make recommendations on the open space set-aside. Mr. Aragi showed members the proposed open space set aside located in a buffer strip along the boarder to Birch Hill Run, a circle of green at the end of the roadway and significant open space on the rear of the property. He went on to say that the strip of open space along the boarder to Birch Hill Run would be removed on the Planning Commissions recommendation. Kelly Boling noted that the circle of green at the end of the roadway wouldn't be acceptable. Members felt that they would like to see protection along the Route 202 side of the property, to protect the town's rural character. Joe Gitterman stated that the proposed set aside at the rear of the property would be landlocked and of no value to the public. The subject of sharing the existing roadway with Birch Hill Run as access was asked of Mr. Aragi, he answered that the owner is not interested. Members asked Dick Sears, First Selectman about this becoming a town road. Mr. Sears stated that Janet Hill and he were going to get together to research the history of Birch Hill Run subdivision. Allen Aragi went on to say that he is open to a Conservation/Cluster development; he wants to work with the town commissions. Mr. Aragi confirmed that there were no slopes over 25% and all soil testing has been done, he has owned the land for over two years. He will be doing the building and expects the homes to sell for between \$800,000.00 and \$1,400,000.00. Members thanked Mr. Aragi for sharing his proposal. Susan Payne encouraged members to do a site visit; the commission will now wait for the official subdivision plan to be referred to them by the Planning Commission.

Members had a brief conversation about the protection of the Route 202 corridor with the imminent growth going on around Washington.

Subcommittee Reports Continued

Scenic Roads: At Mondays Planning Commission meeting Couch Road was designated scenic.

Management and Monitoring of Town properties: Linda Frank asked Dick Sears if the town owned properties such as the Town Hall, Firehouse etc. needed to be monitored by the Conservation Commission as they are taken care of by the towns Building and Properties Committee. Mr. Sears agreed that it was not necessary to continue monitoring of these properties. Susan Payne asked about the town's properties without structures such as New Preston Falls etc. if the Conservation Commission could make recommendations for improvements to these properties. Dick felt that recommendations for public/recreational use would be a good idea.

Conservation Goals for 2007: Susan Payne wanted suggestions for 2007 priorities. Linda Frank referenced the growing Open Space Fund and felt that perhaps identifying properties for preservation. Kelly Boling explained the idea of the transfer of development rights which preserves land while creating more densely developed village centers. The idea of cluster/conservation development was raised. Members went on to discuss looking at the Route 202 corridor for preservation, a Route 202 enhancement program in the vicinity of the Macricostas Land Preserve into the centers of New Preston and Marbledale. Marbledale has great potential for preservation enhancing pedestrian traffic, perhaps sidewalks and using traffic calming measures. Kelly Boling mentioned a tree planting program and there was talk about State Scenic Road designation. Kelly will work on an outline.

Dick Sears left at 6:15pm.

Joe Gitterman spoke about the lack of tax incentives on the town level for open space preservation. Kelly Boling stated that some people feel open space tax incentives discourage farming. Mr. Gitterman is talking about tax abatement for permanent preservation, Susan stated that this is a subject that could be

revisited, Dan Sherr did a lot of work on the subject last year with the Open Space Committee. Joe stated that there needs to be support at the Selectmen's level as well as coordination within the commissions. Susan Payne noted that there is an upcoming meeting of the commission Chairs.

Proposal for Rural Roadscape Zone Regulations: Kelly Boling stated that Zoning will be discussing this at their next meeting.

Kelly Boling excused himself at 6:45pm as he felt a conflict with the last agenda item.

Young Elliot's Farm LLC, 110 Calhoun Street - 2-lot subdivision: Parcel A is 14.39 acres with a proposed 5.03 acre conservation easement on the northeast side of the parcel. Parcel B is 24.83 acres with a 6.38 acre proposed set aside on the south and west side of the parcel. Parcel A has an existing house and barn that will be renovated. Parcel B is proposed to have a 5 bedroom house. A 2.84 acre parcel that borders the Shepaug River was conveyed to Steep Rock Association by the prior owner. Conservation members discussed the proposed set asides. Members felt that they wanted to see the northwest side of parcel A preserved as well as along Calhoun Street. They also wanted to restate that they do not want wetlands, which they feel are already protected, preserved as open space set aside. The Planning Commission will be doing a site walk on February 24th, Conservation Commission members were encouraged to go on that site walk. Susan Payne will draft a letter which she will circulate to members.

Susan Payne circulated copies of "The Habitat" from Spring 2005 a article entitled The Conservation Commission: Your Town's Key to Natural Resource Protection. Pam Osborne will send copies to absent members.

Motion: to adjourn was made by Linda Frank at 6:45pm, seconded by Diane Dupuis, passed unanimously.

Next scheduled meeting of the Conservation Commission is March 7, 2007 at 5:00pm.

Submitted subject to approval,

Pamela L. Osborne, Secretary