

March 5, 2003

Present: Susan Payne, Chairperson, Ruth Alex, Phillip Markert

Alternates: Kelly Boling, Linda Frank

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

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 February 19, 2003 meeting of the Washington Conservation Commission, Linda Frank made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 19th meeting. Kelly Boling seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Referrals from other commissions:

There were no official referrals from other commissions. Susan Payne updated members on some recent activities with the Inland/Wetland Commission of interest to the Conservation Commission. The proposal for property at 67/69 Carmel Hill Road will have a public hearing on March 26th. The Cass/De Pecol property on 46 June Road received approval from Inland/Wetlands. The application for Rizzo/James at 129 Bee Brook Road was denied by Inland/Wetlands.

Scenic Road Ordinance:

This item was mistakenly put on the agenda for tonight's meeting. Joe Gitterman and his sub-committee will attend the March 19th Conservation Commission meeting.

How to accept land as the Town of Washington:

Ruth Alex has been in contact with The Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetland Commissions (CACIWC), Tom O'Dell, Dan McGuinness, Atty. Miles and Atty. Zizka. After speaking with everyone it is still unclear how to legally and in the best interest of the town acquire easements/land. The statute is unclear as to whether acquisitions can be done through one town meeting by enacting an ordinance or each time land/easements are offered a town meeting is required; no one seems to have an answer. Ruth contacted Gary Steinman, of the Roxbury Planning Commission; he stated that their regulations only allow for the acceptance of a fee. They have established a land acquisition fund. Kelly Boling questioned the legality of this. Ms. Alex spoke to Elaine Luckey, First Selectman, letting her know that nobody knows the "right" answer and Ruth's suggestion would be to have the selectman accept the land/easement and transfer the administrative duties to the Conservation Commission. The Conservation Commission has requested a line item, of \$5000, in their budget that would address the costs associated with these acquisitions. Ruth went on to state that the Planning commission needs to be discriminate about accepting land and can suggest fees-in-lieu of land. The land/easement need to benefit the town and not just the abutting landowner. A land acquisition fund needs to be established. Members felt that perhaps the Conservation Commission could set criteria for accepting land/easements. The Conservation Commission should be part of the process, on a case by case basis, to help the town manage easements/land acquisition. Susan Payne will speak to George Bender about this. Members should think about possible criteria for accepting land/easements and fees-in-lieu of land and bring their thoughts to the next Conservation meeting.

Report from Committee Chairs meeting 2/25/03:

Ms. Payne reported that at this meeting they discussed the need to establish a land acquisition fund and that the Board of Selectmen should speak with the Finance Board about this. Ms. Payne also stated that Willie Smith, Chairman of the Historical District Commission, spoke about having funds available to help preserve historic properties in the event that a property owner was unable to preserve a property. Susan mentioned at the February 25th meeting about the formation of a Data Management Subcommittee. There was an inquiry about creating a New Preston Historical District.

Subcommittee Reports:

Canoe Brook: Linda Frank stated that Dirk Sabin is working with the town engineer and they are patiently waiting for snow to melt.

Cell Tower Update: The balloon test for the proposed Warren, Rabbit Hill Road cell tower took place on February 24th. This test showed that the cell tower would be very visible from the Route 202 corridor and Meeker Swamp Preserve. Phil Markert stated that the tower does not need to be that tall if the company would use combining technology.

The Zoning Commission is voting on the proposal to amend their regulations to allow for a proposed cell tower in the New Preston Congregational Church on March 24th.

This commission received notice of a Public Hearing on March 25th at 1:00pm in Hearing Room 2 at the Office of the Connecticut Siting Council, 10 Franklin Square, New Britain, Connecticut regarding the cell tower at 399 Chestnut Land Road in New Milford.

Data Management: Kelly Boling has forwarded a memo to Pam Osborne, Secretary which she will distribute.

Flora/Fauna: no report

Greenway: Susan Payne submitted minutes from the March 4th meeting. They had discussion on the Moody Bridge Foot Bridge, neighbors attended to express concern and opposition to this project. Dorothy Wilson became a new committee member. Work continues on the East Aspetuck River Greenway. Sotheby's International Realty will sponsor publication of 2,000 Greenway postcards. Susan has put together a trail monitoring packet for Pam to distribute with the minutes to Greenway members.

Land Use Info/Welcome Pamphlet Subcommittee: This committee is coming together. Rosanne Schaffner has been added to the subcommittee. ZBA and Zoning members still to be determined.

Water Resources: no report

Other Business: none

Meeting adjourned at 6:25pm.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Pamela L. Osborne, Secretary

The following opportunities are available to members - contact Pam if you are interested.

March 18th - Growing Greener - Conservation by Design

March 20th - Litchfield Area Assessors Assoc. Meeting - Speaker: David Sutherland, Government Relations Director, The Nature Conservancy, will discuss legal components of conservation easements.

March 29th - Land Trust Service Bureau - Twentieth Annual Convocation of Connecticut Land Trusts

March 28th & 29th - Our Changing Coast - Private & Public Land Trusts