

March 8, 2007

Open Space Committee

Present: Patte Doran, Susan Payne, Chick Treadway, Phil Dutton, Charles LaMuniere

Guests: Dirk Sabin, Rick Distel

Report on Tax Abatement: Information was emailed to Charles, Susan and Pam from Dan Sherr. Dan included copies of PA 06-128 "An act authorizing municipalities to abate taxes on open space land and authorizing floating and overlay zones and flexible zoning districts" and the draft of the Washington Open Space Preservation Ordinance with attachment. Members discussed the feasibility of moving forward with the tax abatement for permanently preserved open space because of other money issues in town such as the boat ramp and school. Phil Dutton disagreed stating that there will always be big tickets items before the town. Charles noted that at a selectmen's meeting opposition was taken to the proposal because it was felt that the proposed tax abatement only benefited people with large tracts of land. Discussion continued Patte Doran spoke about the importance of explaining the concept to the public and the fit with the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development. Other comments included that the town doesn't lose property values increase and municipal services decrease. There is a need for a method and priority for accepting easements. Charles noted that Chick Treadway, Dan Sherr and Jack Field have all the information they worked on which is being shared.

Report on PA 490 Eligibility Requirements: Patte Doran reported that putting an easement on PA 490 land does not interfere with retaining the tax advantages for the PA 490, but she did note that the new PA-128 information that Dan Sherr made available may impact it.

Motion: Susan Payne made a motion to accept the minutes from the February 8, 2007 meeting of the Open Space Committee with following correction, page 1, under Strategies Summary, line 23, \$125,000.00 should be changed to \$120,000.00 Charles LaMuniere seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Open Space: Members referred to Section V of the "Open Space Plan" which talks about Consideration for Future Open Space. Members agreed with Chick Treadway when he suggested adding ridgelines to Open Space Preservation Objectives. When discussing the criteria for parcel evaluation Patte Doran noted that when prior evaluations were done adding the point per acre for size made a difference and consideration should be given to points for village center enhancement. Members felt that producing overlays of protected property for our maps would be helpful. Susan Payne is in hopes that the Greenprint will be beneficial. Members will be refining the criteria for parcel evaluation. Members went on to say that water and water resource protection were critical.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00pm.

Next scheduled meeting of the Open Space Committee is April 12, 2007.

Submitted subject to approval,

Pamela L. Osborne, Secretary