

April 12, 2007

Open Space Committee

Present: Susan Payne Chairperson, Patte Doran, Rick Distel, Dan Sherr, Dirk Sabin, Charles LaMuniere

Guests: Michael Brodie

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

Motion: to accept the minutes from the March 8, 2007 meeting of the Open Space Committee with the following amendments: *under Report on Tax Abatement, line eight replace tacks with tracks; line ten and eleven delete the sentence Other comments services decrease. Replace with It's important to remember that land under conservation easement in the Town of Washington remains on the tax roles, at their full value, while 490 lands does have a decreased value. Town services should decrease. At present tax abatement for easements is only seen at the federal level in the Town of Washington. Under Report on PA 490 Eligibility Requirements, replace the sentence with the following: In checking with the Assessor Patte Doran found that putting an easement on PA 490 land does not interfere with retaining the tax advantage for PA 490. In discussing the new PA 128 information provided by Dan Sherr the impact is unknown, was made by Patte Doran, seconded by Charles LaMuniere, passed unanimously.*

Cell Tower Update: Susan Payne reported that Verizon's application for the proposed sites on Route 202 has been filed with the Siting Council and been given docket #332. Ms. Payne went on to say that at the March Zoning Commission meeting they decided to leave the regulations for Telecommunications Antennae, Towers and Facilities as is for now. Susan also reported that the Board of Selectmen has filed intervener status in connection with the cell tower applications; it has been recommended that the Board of Selectmen hire a RF engineer and attorney. The next step in this process is waiting for the Siting Council to set up a hearing date and new balloon test in the Town of Washington.

Procedures: Patte Doran circulated a hand out with a procedure proposal, which Susan Payne felt was a great idea. Ms. Doran felt that the Open Space Committee could do the homework for these proposals and then pass it on to the appropriate commission. In regards to ridgeline protection Ms. Payne told members of the work done by Linda Frank a member of the Conservation Commission which was adopted by the Zoning Commission that dealt with the method of measuring maximum and mean height. Members went on to discuss ridgeline protection, Charles LaMuniere spoke about protection through town ordinance, Dirk Sabin noted that state legislation allows regulating but not prohibition of ridgeline development through the Zoning Commission. Rick Distel felt it was important to identify specific areas. Patte was in agreement start with a specific area. Dan Sherr suggested looking at Kent's new regulations and the state regulations. Dirk Sabin suggested looking over the Peaks and Prominences and Scenic Areas and Vistas maps of the Natural Resource Inventory Report. At the May meeting members will review these maps.

Susan Payne began discussion on Route 202 property formerly owned by Owen Moore, which is back on the market. The property is a total of 31 acres with 5-8 acres available for affordable housing (Washington Community Housing Trust would have ownership of these units) and the rest could be protected as open space.

Secondly Ms. Payne spoke about the Larsen Farm located on Lake Waramaug which is 107 acres. Her understanding is that this property will be divided the house and barns from the upper acreage, the upper acreage being 70+acres. Susan wanted a sense from members if funds should be used on one or both of

these properties. Charles LaMuniere felt the focus should be on the Route 202 property, it's a smaller parcel and highly visible. Susan Payne asked about dividing resources between the two properties. Susan felt that perhaps private, state and federal funds would be sought for the Larsen property. Dirk Sabin suggested a clinical look at these properties through the resources in the Natural Resource Inventory Report.

Charles LaMuniere left the meeting at 6:00pm.

Mr. Distel felt the Route 202 property opened up possibilities for the New Preston area; Ms. Doran liked the housing possibilities.

Motion: after consideration the Open Space Committee recommends that the Conservation Commission continue to pursue acquisition of the Route 202 thirty-one acre property in New Preston (formally owned by Owen Moore) was made by Dan Sherr, seconded by Patte Doran passed unanimously.

Susan Payne asked members about the Larsen Farm property, this farm was evaluated by the criteria point system and scored 277, it ranked highly. She asked if the Open Space Committee was willing to donate funds toward its preservation? Dan Sherr asked about funding for this project, Susan thought that at present no funds were yet allocated, members don't want their funds used for due diligence. There was minimal continued discussion.

Motion: the Open Space Committee feels that the Larsen Farm is worthy of preservation and is willing to allocate funds in support of a larger preservation effort was made by Patte Doran, seconded by Rick Distel, passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:20pm.

Next scheduled meeting of the Open Space Committee is May 10, 2007 at 5:00pm.

Submitted subject to approval,

Pamela L. Osborne, Secretary