

May 17, 2006

Open Space Committee

Present: Dan Sherr Chairman, Patte Doran, Susan Payne, Joann Caldara, Chick Treadway

Guests: Rev. Amy & Kevin Egan, Don Duffy, Michael & Natalie Brodie, Danielle Baechle, Peter Talbot Historic Commission, Peter Arturi Chair Historic Commission, Dick Sears First Selectman, residents

Dan Sherr began the meeting by thanking the Wheaton Road Association members for allowing the Open Space Committee the opportunity to meet with them. Dan passed out a packet of information. Mr. Sherr went on to state that a real estate add for a large parcel on Wheaton Road caught his eye as potential development and felt it was a good time to chat with the area residents. Dan would like to touch on the following topics about Marble Dale: boundaries, history and changes. Don Etherington stopped by to drop off a note.

Danielle Baechle noted that there was strong support when Wheaton Road became a "Scenic Road". She has surveyed several residents and many are in favor of making part of Marble Dale a Historical District.

What is Marble Dale? A review of maps, boundaries and terrain. Dan Sherr began by asking residents what they considered the boundaries of Marble Dale? The consensus was that the boundary extended up Scofield Hill to Mygatt and perhaps out Sunset Lane. South bound to the New Milford town line on Route 202, but north on Route 202 as well as Findley Road was indecisive. Peter Arturi stated that you would eventually need boundaries to pursue a Historical District and have a two thirds acceptance by property owners within those boundaries. Susan Payne offered the following start toward a Historical District define the area, assess property owners interest and document the area's history. Ms. Payne added that having a Historical District would allow for some control. Peter Talbot stated that The Historic District Commission is concerned with what is visible from the public way. Peter Arturi added they do not control color and can not limit renewable energy resources.

Dan Sherr stated that the Open Space Committee is always looking for opportunities to preserve open space. Preservation can be in the way of walkways/pathways/greenways through out Washington. Dan went on to say that the 2003 Plan of Conservation and Development committed to 30% permanently protected open space in Washington by 2015, this is 7500 acres. He also noted that the 2003 Plan of Conservation and Development identified Route 202 in Marbledale and Route 47 into Washington as "gateways" to Washington.

Donald Duffy's spoke about the parcel Dan Sherr referenced on Wheaton Road which is up for sale, Mr. Duffy noted that the Washington/New Milford town line runs through this property and New Milford has different Zoning Regulations than Washington. Mr. Duffy went on to describe the Etherington property as bordering both sides of Wheaton Road and extending up to Sunset Lane, he also stated that historically there were farms on both Mygatt and Scofield which were considered part of Marbledale. Marbledale was originally part of New Milford which later became part of Washington. Dick Sears felt that the thing to do is ask people "where do you live?"

What is the history of Marble Dale? Dan Sherr posted the Cultural Features map from the Natural Resource Inventory Report which shows a concentration of historic buildings in the Marble Dale area. Historic buildings are defined as every building over 50 years old. Mr. Sherr went on to reference the book "Empire over the Dam" which spoke about the 300' drop in water level from Lake Waramaug to Marble Dale and mentioned there being 17+ mills in the Marble Dale area at one point in time. Dan went

on to ask about the quarries in the area. The quarries were believed to be shallow and stone was removed by layers. Discussion went briefly to the green which used to be in Marble Dale and the installation of the blinking light.

Are we pleased with what it is today and what would we change. Natalie Brodie spoke first stating she would like no more development and would like to see sidewalks and benches. Mr. Duffy would like to see a grocery store. Peter Talbot noted that you need to have development to support a store, there is a small deli/grocery store north on Route 202 at the gas station. Ms. Baechle asked about funding for things like sidewalks and green space. Dick Sears answered that it takes community organization; the residents need to decide what they want and then approach the Planning Commission and First Selectmen. Mrs. Brodie noted concern for all the empty business space. Other residents present felt that you could cripple the businesses with added regulations; there are many underlying issues such as parking and water. There is a lot of water. There is a mix of residential properties and businesses, in order to encourage business things need to be brought up to code which is expensive. Patte Doran asked what impact would becoming a historical district have on Marble Dale? Peter Arturi noted that Litchfield Green is a Historical District. There was continued discussion of the individual properties having their own wells and septic systems in such a confined space.

Michael Brodie asked about preserving open space. Susan Payne stated that preservation can be done through conservation donations. Ms. Payne showed residents an up to date map of permanently preserved land in Washington, there are no permanently preserved parcels in Marble Dale. Susan explained that small parcels are important too. Danielle Baechle stated that the Myfield project will give Marble Dale its first conservation easement and went on to identify three large parcels in the Marble Dale area as the Brod (which is for sale), Moriniere and Etherington properties. Susan Payne informed the residents that the Planning Commission requires open space set aside or a fee in lieu of open space for any sub-division. Dan Sherr added that you cannot stop development but there are ways of managing it.

Interest in Session #2. Dan Sherr will forward information to Michael Brodie about creating a Historical District. Dan will leave it up to the Wheaton Road Association to contact him for further meetings. Susan Payne commended the association on becoming a Scenic Road; it was a good first step. Danielle Baechle expressed concern with proposed increase density in Marble Dale as noted in the 2003 Town Plan of Conservation and Development. Susan Payne explained that preservation takes time; you need to create awareness and have conversations with each other. Dick Sears agreed it takes planning. Patte Doran added that there appears to be a good cross section of ideas that can be formalized.

There were thanks all around and the meeting adjourned at 6:30pm.

Next scheduled meeting of the Open Space Committee is June 21, 2006 at 5:00pm.

Submitted subject to approval,

Pamela L. Osborne