

May 18, 2005

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Present: Dan Sherr, Chairman, Patte Doran, Charles LaMunier, Susan Payne, Joann Caldara, Chick Treadway, Colleen Weston

Guest: Kelly Boling, First Selectman, Dick Sears

Chairman Dan Sherr called the meeting to order at 5:07pm.

MOTION: to accept the minutes of the April 20, 2005 meeting was made by Susan Payne, seconded by Joann Caldara and passed unanimously.

Brainstorming Open Space Guidance for Zoning and the Depot Study: Dan Sherr began by stating the job of the Open Space Committee is to be advocates of open space to groups focusing on open space. It is easy to recognize initiatives while riding on back roads through out town, but how about open space preservation in the villages? The job can be broken down into two phases offering guidance and defining boundaries for the villages. In the Depot you have the waterways: Canoe Brook, Mallory Brook, Bantam River and Shepaug River. There is a need to maintain access to the waterways as well as preservation.

There was brief discussion on the stabilization of Canoe Brook near the Washington Art Association and the knotweed problem. Charles LaMunier noted that seeding of the knotweed has taking the plant further and further down stream. It was suggested to ask the selectman's office to handle the cutting process; they have an application before the Inland Wetland Commission for bridge repair and stabilization of Canoe Brook.

Patte Doran suggested before getting into recommendation for preservation of open space in the villages, members discuss an overall theme. Charles LaMunier asked about the need to define what open space in the villages is? Dan Sherr defined the open space as being able to walk to a park with in half a mile of your home. Patte Doran sees conflict arising with the need for parking; Dan added possible conflict with increased pedestrian walkways. Dan went on to state that multi unit dwellings within the village centers will need ready access to services.

Dan invited Kelly Boling to discuss the transfer of development rights. Kelly stated that this is a way to preserve property in what is viewed as traditional open space areas outside the villages. Kelly elaborated that in the Natural Resource Inventory Report it stated that 2,000 more homes could be built in Washington. Kelly explained that transferring the development rights to another piece of land moves density requirements also.

Dick Sears, First Selectman interjected that Dan and Susan will be the voice for the Open Space Committee on the Depot Study and feels it's too early to give suggestions. Dan stated that it was not the intent to make statements but have discussion at today's and next month's meetings. Charles's suggestion was preserve the park from Titus Park to Washington Pharmacy. Chick added the "old town garage site" should be included. Dan also added preservation of the existing Greenway. Susan Payne noted that there is now a conservation easement on property behind the Washington Supply, and she's hopeful that there will eventually be access to the "Jones Bird Walk". Patte mentioned the role to preserve "rural character". Dan circulated a map that Zoning is using to identify the area where multi unit housing could be located in the village center. Kelly interjected that transferring development rights could be used as a tool to preserve open space outside the village. Dan mentioned that the firm involved with the Depot Study is using a "form bases" so it's not just density. Joann Caldara stated that density and development can

change the demeanor of the village very quickly. An example being "The Green" used to be a functioning green not what you see today. Dick Sears expressed what's exciting is the public process of the study. Mr. Sherr asked if in our role as advocates do we want to make a statement of guidance? Kelly Boling stated that traditional villages have defining edges, preserve open space to define village edges and reuse land within the village. Dan asked again if the committee wants to make a statement or wait for the three day June charrette (June 16, 17, 18). Joann confirmed that the Depot Study group will be liaisons for getting information to the firm in charge. This role is separate from the Open Space. Dick Sears noted that they are looking for the positive not negative, what is your vision? In closing Dick mentioned the beauty of the pond area behind the Town Hall which is often over looked.

Members wavered on changing the next meeting date but decided to meet again on the regularly scheduled date of June 15th.

Meeting adjourned at 5:57pm.

Next scheduled meeting of the Open Space Committee is June 15, 2005 at 5:00pm.

Submitted subject to approval,

Pamela L Osborne