

July 17, 2002

Present: Susan Payne Chairman, Ruth Alex, Betsy Corrigan, Joe Gitterman

Alternates: Linda Frank, Dirk Sabin

Guests: Elaine Luckey First Selectman, Addie Roberts, Chris Charles, Margie Purnell

The Chairman, Susan Payne called the meeting to order at 7:10pm.

Linda Frank was seated as an alternate.

Approval of the minutes from the June 19, 2002 meeting of the Washington Conservation Commission; Joe Gitterman made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 19th meeting, seconded by Ruth Alex, passed unanimously.

Referrals from other commissions: none

Subcommittee Reports:

Scenic Vistas/Roads:

Joe Gitterman reported that things are progressing and expects to have a written document by September. Once again he thanked Elaine Luckey for all her input and information.

Flora:

Betsy Corrigan reported that she hasn't met with her subcommittee again but will soon. Betsy did share some pest alerts with members, giant hogweed and water chestnut; which have both been found locally. A concern with giant hogweed is the toxic sap which can cause scarring. The water chestnut has been found in Bantam Lake. Betsy will post notices in the Town Hall. Betsy felt that efforts should be focused on educating the public on the "new" evasive species that are more easily eradicated. Addie Roberts suggested posting notices on the Town's web site. Betsy will contact Rex Swain. Dirk also suggested using the "Wanted" posters that were used several years ago to draw peoples attention. Betsy hopes to meet with small groups of people to do walks and site visits, through Steep Rock. In closing Betsy mentioned she had spotted native lupines on the road side, she asked Elaine how best to save the area from road side mowing. Elaine asked Betsy to get her "site specific" information and she will relay it to the highway crew.

Water Resources:

Susan received a memo from Phil Markert. Pam Osborne, Secretary will copy this letter and send it to all members.

Greenway:

Susan Payne stated that the Greenway map is now on the town's web site. She also reported that the Washington Garden Club made a donation of \$500 to Greenway. The Greenway committee continues work on links to the existing Greenway through the Roxbury Land Trust, Mt. Tom and Bonnie Mathews is researching unimproved roads. Ruth Alex asked about the footbridge connecting Riverwoods to the walking path at Washington Primary School. Addie Roberts is spearheading this project and reports that the footbridge is still in the planning stages. Ms. Roberts states that Atty. Fairbairn is doing some investigating (pro bono)work on the access to properties. Susan Payne also added that Greenway will be

making a proposal for the Old Town Garage site. Greenway will not meet in August and is scheduled to meet next on September 4th.

Planning Commission 7/16 meeting on Conservation Section:

Susan began by stating that the time for the Special Planning meeting was changed. Susan voiced her frustration with the work that has been done, she stated that the Open Space Interim Report would answer a lot of the questions being raised. A lot of work has already been done on the Open Space Plan. The open space inventory subcommittee has gone as far as it sees fit until they receive public input. Jack Field and Susan Payne have been working through George Bender, Chairman of the Planning Commission, in regards to the Plan of Conservation and Development. Susan as well as members feels the Conservation Commission should be involved, there are lots of people available and willing to help. Dirk responded by stating that Glenn Chalder was told to follow the Natural Resource Report and is sure he didn't realize there was such a vocal/spirited group willing to help. Dirk asked Susan for a copy of the Open Space Map, parcel map and analysis of parcels work that the Open Space Inventory subcommittee did. Elaine Luckey gave Dirk her up-to-date copy of the parcel analysis and Susan gave Dirk the Open Space map and will get him the parcel map for coping. Chris Charles spoke up and asked that Conservation members communicate their comments through Planning (via Janet Hill) and not to Glenn Chalder. He feels that part of the Planning Commissions frustration is constraints on time and budget. The Planning Commission is trying to do the best update of the Plan of Conservation and Development within the time and budget. Chris added that the Planning and Conservation Commissions need to get together to talk. Addie Roberts added that the booklets and memos, from Planimetrics, are not a finished product, but a work in progress. Addie also feels the two commissions (Planning and Conservation) need to be kinder to each other. Susan stated that voicing opinions should not be misinterpreted as hostility and the frustration is with Glenn Chalder and not the Planning Commission. She feels Glenn is not hearing comments being submitted. The Planning Commission is doing the best job possible with this big responsibility. Dirk recommended written comments through Janet Hill, which is what Susan has been doing. Ruth added that there is a lot of work that has already been done. Margie Purnell interjected that these documents are in predraft form and Glenn is most likely "testing the waters" and to wait for the draft of the Plan of Conservation and Development. Margie went on to say that she felt this is an education for both the Town and Glenn Chalder. Susan distributed copies of Chapter 4 to all Conservation members and asked them to review it. By Jack Field's count there are 128 strategies listed in Chapter 4 and Susan would like members to narrow this down and perhaps add ideas that are not already in this chapter. The next Special Planning meeting is scheduled for August 21st at 4:00pm. Both Addie and Chris stated that the Planning Commission is more than willing to change the time to 7:00pm if that is better for Conservation members.

Canoe Brook Project Update:

Linda Frank reports that Randy Bernard (of the Washington Environmental Council) and Dirk Sabin are working together on this project. Linda referred to the town budget for 2004/2005 a line item for proposed work on Canoe Brook and also a budget item for 2003/2004 repaving the rear parking lot at the Town Hall. Dirk states that this planning is in the early stages. Linda circulated pictures of "Carter's Wall" on Walker Brook Road and a bridge also on Walker Brook Road built by the Town of New Milford. Betsy went on to voice her concern for passages to/through wetlands in animal habitat areas.

Samson Driveway:

Joe Gitterman reports that things are growing but has not checked out the removal of debris. He will do so in the near future.

Housing Report:

Pam distributed copies of the Final Report of the Housing Study Committee.

Other Business:

Members discussed the Zoning meeting with the Cell Tower representatives. Discussion centered around being proactive and identifying sites ahead of time. The Route 202 corridor is a very likely site and there has been talk of the steeple at the New Preston Congregational Church. The State Siting Council has the authority over local Zoning Boards by towns can give input. Joe Gitterman asked about installing cell towers in power company right-of-ways and Linda Frank asked about removal of towers should they become obsolete. Elaine and Pam will look for information from Sprint on potential cell tower sites.

Betsy updated members on her ongoing work with Nick Belintoni and Ned Swigart on archeological mapping. They will be adding approximately 40 more sites in Washington and are also working on model regulations. Betsy stated that at this point she needs a digitized parcel map. Joe Gitterman stated that speaking from his own experience there is a lack of knowledge on the part of new comers to town about the historic, cultural or archeological aspect of ones property. Joe feels that person to person contact is needed. Somebody has to take a constructive interest and have a proactive attitude to help inform people. Members agreed that the best place to start is through the Real Estate offices; but this doesn't seem feasible. Pam will obtain copies of the tax assessor's conveyance tax forms for the next meeting.

The commission has received the report it requested form the CT Council on Environmental Quality, Susan Payne took this information home to look at.

The Natural Resource Report disc is back in the file (returned from Planimetrics).

Pam will forward the CACIWC membership for the Conservation Commission to the First Selectmen's office.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.

Next scheduled meeting of Washington Conservation Commission is August 7th 2002 at 7:00pm.

Submitted subject to approval,

Pamela L. Osborne, Secretary