

# July 21, 2004

## OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

**Present:** Patti Doran, Phil Gorrivan, Susan Payne, Chick Treadway, Dan Sherr, Colleen Weston, Diane Williams

**Guests:** Bill Fairbairn (Housing Committee Member), Chris Charles, Press

Dan Sherr, Chairman called the meeting to order at 5:10pm.

**MOTION:** to accept the minutes of the June 16, 2004 meeting with the following amendments: The meeting was called to order at 5:00pm by Chairman Dan Sherr and the spelling of Colleen Weston's name to be corrected, was made by Susan Payne, seconded by Diane Williams and passed unanimously.

First Selectman Dick Sears has established a "Strategic Planning Committee". Members received copies of "Guidelines from the Strategic Planning Committee on Town Presentations". According to the guidelines each committee will present at its own meeting, but at the Town's October 4th Annual Meeting Mr. Sears would like each committee to give a five minutes presentation, prior to the October Town Meeting he would like a "white paper" with key points and brief discussion that can be included in the Town Newsletter leading up to the Annual Meeting.

Dan asked members if they could get everything together using Mr. Sears's timetable, he would like the Open Space Committee to identify four or five key initiatives. Bill Fairbairn from the housing committee explained that he was writing the document for their committee, they will edit it at their next meeting. Mr. Sherr asked if this would work for our committee. Susan Payne stated that the information is available you just need to build an outline, what will our key points be? Colleen Weston offered to edit the document and suggested keeping it simple. Ms. Payne will create a draft document and give it to Mr. Fairbairn to check and edit before it goes to Ms. Weston for final edit.

Bill Fairbairn stated that the Housing Committee has met three times and have concluded that Washington needs diversity in housing. There is a need for single family limited equity, assisted living and high end as well as affordable condos. The question is where it should be the public needs prodding to make it work. Mr. Fairbairn feels the Open Space and Housing Committees should work together, a large parcel could be used for both open space and housing. Ms. Doran added that open space is precious which makes it become expensive. Acquiring open space could include the housing piece, reducing the inventory of open space dives up the cost. The big issue with housing is to have diverse income groups while maintaining control. Bonding is an attractive way of doing this, it pays for itself. The town has limited resources and needs to set priorities.

Mr. Fairbairn stated growth is coming; does the town want to control it? Members went on to discuss the different types of housing needs. Mr. Fairbairn concluded by stating that the Washington Housing Trust has just completed an affordable housing project in New Preston and their next step should be a single family home.

Discussion came back to the open space issue. Patti Doran stated that 70% of the land in Washington is presumed open space and only 18% is permanently preserved. Ms. Doran feels that the public should be given the statistics and then wrestle with the issue. Chick Treadway suggested a more visual presentation with overlays showing what's permanently protected and what is temporarily protected, and then what does the public want to preserve? Mr. Treadway referenced the maps in the Natural Resource Inventory Report as being user friendly. Susan Payne cautioned members that too much information will be

overwhelming. Mr. Sherr added that you want to engage the public in the decision making project. Chick Treadway asked if the Board of Finance was involved in this process, the answer was that they are present but not active.

Mr. Sherr asked about the economic part of the presentation. Susan mentioned that the Town has created an Open Space Fund.

It was decided that Chairman Sherr will correlate an outline to be forwarded to Ms. Payne and Mr. Treadway for additions. That draft will go to Bill Fairbairn and then onto Colleen Weston for final editing. It will be a two page "white Paper".

Meeting adjourned at 6:55pm.

Next scheduled meeting of the Open Space Committee is August 18, 2004 at 5:00pm.

Submitted subject to approval,

Pamela L. Osborne, Secretary