

July 5, 2006

Present: Susan Payne, Kelly Boling, Linda Frank, Joe Gitterman, Phillip Markert

Alternates: Diane Dupree, Dan Sherr

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

Diane Dupuis was seated as an alternate.

Motion: Linda Frank made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 3, 2006 meeting of the Washington Conservation Commission as submitted; Diane Dupuis seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The Conservation Commission received a letter dated June 7, 2006 from E. Anthony Griffiths regarding 25 Litchfield Turnpike, New Preston. Mr. Griffiths attached a copy of a letter dated June 6, 2006 addressed to the Zoning Commission, as well as photos. Mr. Griffiths is complaining about "commercial" activities at 25 Litchfield Turnpike which is a neighboring property. Susan Payne checked in with the Land Use offices and they have been informed and are working on the complaint.

Discuss Attendance: Susan Payne referenced an email she had sent out to members, reminding members about the importance of attendance at meetings and the teamwork which is needed to complete projects and move ahead.

Referrals or new projects: No new projects were referred to the Conservation Commission, Ms Payne reminded members to stop by or check on line what is happening with the other commissions.

At 5:10pm Kelly Boling arrived, which unseated alternate Diane Dupuis.

Review ordinance regarding the Open Space Fund and process of accessing money: Members received copies of the ordinance establishing an Open Space and Land Acquisition Fund as amended on September 18, 2005. Susan Payne explained that First Selectman Dick Sears had asked her to look at the possibility of amending the ordinance to allow for the Board of Selectmen to access funds timelier. Dan Sherr asked where the motivation came for this request. Ms. Payne stated that Mr. Sears felt the process was cumbersome and at some point the Selectmen may want to move more quickly than the ordinance allows. Members had a very lengthy discussion about different scenarios, the amount to authorize and who would sign on offers. It was decided that no decision could be made until the commission finds out if the Selectman have the authority to sign contracts for options to buy, Susan Payne will check into this.

Discuss the allocation of new money being collected per land use document fees: Members received copies of an Ordinance Creating The Goshen Land Acquisition Fund, which prompted discussion of the possibilities of adding to the Open Space and Land Acquisition Fund by asking for a percentage of the conveyance tax fee and the penalties paid on PA 490. Dan Sherr noted that it was his understanding that Goshen has no funds coming in and were looking for income, where as Washington has an established fund which is added to each year presently at the rate of \$150,000 per year.

Review of proposal for Rural Roadscape Zone Regulations: Kelly Boling has the latest draft of the proposed regulations. Pam will email them to members as well as forward a copy to Planning Commission Chair Addie Roberts.

Recommendations for tightening land use regulations: Phil Markert has been looking at tightening the land use regulations, he feels there is a good framework in place but other towns have better wording.

Phil would specifically like to see a reduction of property taxes for land preservation. Mr. Markert went on to say that the town has to agree that this needs to be done and all entities need to mesh i.e. The Town Plan of Conservation and Development, Planning Commission, Zoning Commission and Selectmen. You need the united strength for legitimacy and enforcement, a consensus of everyone working together. Joe Gitterman felt that you needed to give specific examples of changes. Phil will continue his quest.

Subcommittee Reports

Open Space Committee: Dan Sherr stated that the Open Space Committee is shifting strategy to conversations with the villages, the first one being held at St. Andrew's Church in Marble Dale on May 17th. The conversation expanded beyond open space to include Historic Preservation. They discussed what they wanted Marble Dale to be what they were wanted to save and what they were willing to give up. Historical Preservation and what's happening on Route 202 seems to be two starting issues. There is also the need to define what Marble Dale's boundaries are. Dan asked members for their opinion as to whether he should push an agenda with the Marble Dale group or back off and tell them to contact him when they are to open space issues. Dan went on to state that the group wants more direct involvement in what is happening and he's wondering how much the Open Space Committee should be involved. Dan does not want to see endless conversations of what could be but a test of an idea. Susan Payne stated that the people have to drive it forward, there are lots of suggestions in the Plan of Conservation and Development and Open Space Plan. The consensus of the Conservation members was to have another meeting with the Marble Dale group.

Ridgeline Protection: Linda Frank will continue her contact with David Owen, Zoning Chairman.

Archaeological Resources Protection: no report

Land Use Data Management/training of Town Land Use staff: Pam Osborne had re emailed Harry White about training, but received no response. Pam will contact Housatonic Valley Association.

Greenway: Susan Payne reports that they have ordered the new signs that extend the Greenway up to Macricostas Land Preserve.

Management and Monitoring of Town properties: no new activity

Scenic Roads: no new activity - Kelly Boling told Joe Gitterman he would be interested in working on State Scenic Road designation, Joe will get the information to Kelly.

Cell Tower Update: Diane Dupuis has been checking into rumors of a tower on Rabbit Hill but has not had any confirmation.

Flora & Fauna: no report

Water Resources: no new activity

Best Development Practices brochure: tabled till next month

Meeting adjourned at 6:45pm.

Next scheduled meeting of the Washington Conservation Commission is August 2, 2006 at 5:00pm.

Submitted subject to approval,

Pamela L. Osborne, Secretary