

# July 7, 2004

**Present:** Susan Payne, Kelly Boling, Phillip Markert

**Alternates:** Linda Frank, Diane Dupuis

**Guests:** Jack Field, Dick Sears First Selectman, Mr. & Mrs. Burke

**Members are asked to call Susan Payne at home (868-9348) if they are unable to attend a meeting.**

Susan Payne, Chairperson called the meeting to order at 5:10pm.

Linda Frank and Diane Dupuis were seated as alternates.

**MOTION: Approval of the minutes from the June 2, 2004 meeting of the Washington Conservation Commission, Linda Frank made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 2nd meeting. Diane Dupuis seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**Referrals from other Commissions:** There were no new referrals from other commissions. The Beck application that was referred to Conservation is still being continued with the Planning Commission.

**TPOCD - Open Space Committee report:** Susan Payne reports that Dan Sherr has taken the Chairmanship of the Open Space Committee. She feels this committee is at the point of joining with the Housing Committee. First Selectman Sears informed members he has put together a Planning Committee to help budget for the big picture including needs for municipality, renovating the primary school, open space and the housing pieces. He added that Jack Field is part of this committee and has been very helpful. Mr. Sears would like this to be an open public process and is trying to bring all the issues to the table. He would like to see the public invited to a meeting to explain the overall planning process and then have individual forums on each topic with a final meeting to assess all information. Jack Field added you need to find the tax capacity or financial position of the town and then prioritize. Ms. Payne asked if all meetings were to be held in the Town Hall. She asked how we communicate this to the entire public. Mr. Markert suggested checking with other towns to see what they are doing. Mr. Sears said this would be handled by the sub-groups. He also believes that most towns do a Plan of Conservation and Development and then put it on a shelf. Washington wants to implement the plan. Kelly added that land use regulations will also have to keep up with the changes. Mr. Field went on to state that you will not be able to do everything, you need to get a sense of priorities from the townspeople.

Members were given copies of the correspondence between Kelly Boling and Michael Zizka, Esq. regarding P.A. 490 for Open Space Classification. Jack Field explained that when Ruth Alex did her survey of P.A. 490 for Open Space it was concluded that this would be counter productive because the preservation is temporary not permanent. What they are looking for is tax abatement for permanent preservation. Mr. Field referred to State Statute Sec. 7-131b which allows for relief through written request with the Assessor or Board of Assessment Appeals, what would be the right mechanism for this relief? Kelly felt that the Planning Commission first needs to identify desirable land.

**Farmland Preservation:** Dick Sears recently attended a meeting at White Memorial Foundation about encouraging and welcoming farming in our communities. Mr. Sears also mentioned he had a conversation with a local farmer whose "historic house" assessment went through the roof. Members talked about abatement for farmers, there needs to be criteria established. Members also went on to talk about making farming viable in this area.

**Management and Monitoring of Town Properties:** nothing new to report

## **Subcommittee Reports**

**Canoe Brook:** No new information.

**School Connection (SVHS and Gunnery/Environmental Club):** No activity.

**Cell Tower Update:** No new information

**Land Use Data Management:** Kelly Boling will check with George Blake about updating the Arc View information. Kelly also spoke about purchasing a projector to get the program up and usable for Land Use Commissions. Phil Markert suggested the Town and the Washington Environmental Counsel work together with funding. Kelly and Dick Sears will discuss this further.

**Flora & Fauna:** No report

**Greenway:** Susan Payne reports that Greenway continues to move along with monitoring, maintenance and their trail guide.

**Land Use Info/Welcome Pamphlet Committee:** The committee is doing final work on the pamphlet and is looking into funding.

**Scenic Road:** No report. Dick Sears mentioned that Shinar Mountain Road will be on the agenda for the August Planning meeting for Scenic Road designation.

**Water Resources:** Phil Markert reports that Randy Bernard and Dan Sherr have been doing a lot of testing, with no startling results. Members briefly discussed air pollution.

## **Other Business**

Chairperson Susan Payne suggested members forego the August meeting. She noted that if any referrals come in members could be contacted and a meeting could be arranged.

**MOTION: Linda Frank made a motion to cancel the August 4th meeting of the Conservation Commission.**

**Meeting adjourned at 6:40pm.**

**Next meeting of the Conservation Commission is September 1, 2004 at 5:00pm.**

Submitted subject to approval,

Pamela L. Osborne, Secretary