

# August 6, 2003

**Present:** Susan Payne, Kelly Boling, Elizabeth Corrigan, Joe Gitterman

**Alternates:** Linda Frank, Diane Dupuis

**Guests:** Jack Field, Elaine Luckey, First Selectman, Chris Charles, Planning Commission, Press

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

Susan Payne, Chairman called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

Alternates Linda Frank and Diane Dupuis were seated.

**MOTION: Approval of the minutes from the July 16, 2003 meeting of the Washington Conservation Commission, Linda Frank made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 16th meeting with the following correction; under TPOCD: the sixth sentence should read; Susan Payne was disappointed that under the auspices of Planimetrics the Conservation Commission did not have a public meeting as it was suppose to. Diane Dupuis seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

Regular member Joe Gitterman arrived at 5:10pm.

## **Open Space Plan**

Jack Field was present to discuss the latest developments with the Open Space Plan. Questions arose when the Planning Commission said that they would adopt the Open Space Plan into the Town Plan of Conservation and Development. Jack recapped the history of the Open Space Plan. Some members of the Open Space Steering Committee objected to parts of the Open Space Plan. Jack has since spoken with Chris Charles and Hank Martin and has rewritten the Open Space Plan. The newest August 6th version of the Open Space Plan went out via email to the Conservation Commission, Open Space Sub-committee and Open Space Steering Committee members. Jack Field was unable to contact Dick Dutton of the Open Space Steering Committee. Changes made to the plan were highlighted. Mr. Field is in hopes that the Conservation Commission will accept the revised plan. Kelly Boling questioned Chris Charles as to if the Planning Commission would make changes to the document. Mr. Charles indicated that no changes would be made; the Open Space Plan would be adopted into the Town Plan of Conservation and Development as is. Discussion continued on how to set up a fund for open space.

**MOTION: Kelly Boling made the motion to accept the amended Open Space Plan dated (8/6). Joe Gitterman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

Members asked Chris Charles about a timetable for completion of the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). Chris stated that Chris Wood from Planimetrics and George Bender, Planning Commission Chairman are working on this timetable. Mr. Charles believes that the POCD will go to a Town Meeting in September or October with completion by the end of 2003. The next special meeting for the Planning Commission on the POCD is August 19th at 4:00pm. Discussion ensued on the subject of considering open space as part of PA-490. Elaine Luckey gave reference to State Statute Sec. 7-131b.

## **Referrals from Other Commissions**

Elaine Luckey brought forward a request from Roger Cannavaro about property on River Road. The town holds ownership to part of the old railroad right-of-way along River Road. According to Elaine ownership differed according to land deeds for parcels along the railroad property and the town acquired ownership

of this piece. Mr. Cannavaro has been approached about removing dead trees on this property. Mr. Cannavaro doesn't think the property benefits the town and asked if the town might give up ownership of this parcel. Members discussed future uses for this River Road parcel and its proximity to the Elderly Housing Units.

**MOTION: Joe Gitterman made a motion that the Town of Washington should keep possession of the railroad bed along River Road. Linda Frank seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.**

Susan Payne had a request from a property owner on which there was a conservation easement created November 7, 2002 the land is located at 121 West Church Hill Road. The property owner has asked permission to install a driveway across the conservation easement. There is a utility pole located in the best spot for a driveway. In discussing this request members felt that the owner should pursue one of the following options: 1. move the utility pole 2. request a trade off of land to be used as the driveway for land elsewhere on the property. Kelly Boling also brought up the question of the Conservation Commission having the authority to allow activity within the easement. Betsy Corrigan added that there is no habitat value to the easement along the road. Members also agreed that allowing this request was not a good precedent to set for future situations. Susan Payne will respond accordingly to the property owner and Pam Osborne, secretary will forward a copy of the conservation easement to Ms. Payne.

**Bantam River Watershed Coalition** - Dan Sherr will reschedule in the fall

### **Road Discontinuation & Greenway Potential**

Kelly Boling reported that a letter including a list of five or six roads to be discontinued has been sent to the Planning Commission. At their meeting they created a sub-committee to deal with this issue. Dimitri Rimsky and Fritz Byerly are on this sub-committee. Mr. Boling hopes to take this subject to a town meeting in the fall. Kelly's sub-committee will meet again next week. Joe Gitterman asked what would happen to this land if the town decided not to retain ownership. Kelly explained that by discontinuing the road the land would revert back to adjoining property owners or the town could retain use of the land for walkways, bike or bridle trails.

### **Monitoring of Town Properties**

Linda Frank is waiting on communication from the Shepaug School, probably this fall when school is back in session.

### **Subcommittees**

**Canoe Brook** - Elaine Luckey explained that work continues on obtaining grants. Linda Frank will check in with the Washington Environmental Council and their involvement in this project.

**School Connection** - addressed above

**Cell Tower Update** - no new information

**Data Management** - no new information

**Flora & Fauna** - Betsy Corrigan reported that she has found the giant hogweed plant on Valley Road just over the town line in Warren. The plant is located on the river bank and she would like to send notification to the property owner. Members agreed, Betsy will compose a letter and forward it to Susan Payne. Betsy will be able to put the property owner in contact with people who will help eradicate the plant. Ms. Corrigan states that Mike Klemmens is looking for funding for the bio-diversity study. Betsy

also reported ongoing documentation of species in the eastern section of Meeker Swamp.

**Greenway** - no meeting in August

**Land Use Info/Welcome pamphlet** - meeting date changed to 4th Thursday of month.

**Scenic Road Ordinance** - A press release was done which appeared in local papers. The SRO is also on the Town's web site under "What's New" and "Conservation Commission". Joe Gitterman has not received any feed back as of yet.

**Water Resources** - no new information

## **TPOCD**

Chris Charles told members that the 6th draft of the POCD should be ready by the August 19th special meeting. The most recent plan is available on the Town's website.

## **Other Business**

Members briefly reviewed plans for a proposed sub-division on Sunset Lane. The Planning Commission is doing a site visit Saturday morning at 9:30pm. Susan encouraged any Conservation members who could, should participate.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30pm.

Next scheduled meeting of the Conservation Commission is August 20, 2003 at 5:00pm.

Submitted subject to approval,

Pamela L. Osborne, Secretary