

August 6, 2008

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

Alternate Present: Ric Sonder

Guests: Patte Doran, Phil Dutton

Staff Present: Shelley White

Susan Payne called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. and seated members Phil Markert, Linda Frank, Kelly Boling, Joe Gitterman and herself.

Consideration of the Minutes:

The July 2, 2008 Regular Meeting Minutes were accepted as amended.

Page 2:

Line #: Should read:

22-24 Delete Motion...

25 Mr. Boling stated that he was in favor of the C.C. discussing why they should or should...

29 ...discussing the property in question will be affected if discussing it outside of executive....

Page 3:

Line #: Should read:

12 ...happen that the conservation values of the subject property must be substantially preserved. Ms. Payne....

Mr. Gitterman made comments trying to clarify the scenic road ordinance and how it relates to tree removal along a scenic road. Commissioners discussed how they could inform the public about this issue by possibly requesting something in the town newsletter or a revision in the Land Use brochure.

Motion: to accept the July 2, 2008 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Conservation Commission as amended, by Kelly Boling, Seconded by Susan Payne, passed 5-0.

Referrals or New Projects:

Ms. Payne brought the Camp Windgauge LLP Project to the attention of the Conservation Commission. Mr. Boling recused himself. The request from Open Space Equity is for a waiver of the open space set-aside requirement of the Planning Commission for the subdivision of the Windgauge Project on Old North Road. The Property Survey Map for Camp Wingauge LLP, by Arthur H. Howland and Associates, P.C., with revised date of 7-30-08 was presented. The property is 31.3 acres and the land owners voluntarily planned open space preservation which places approximately 20 acres of this property under a conservation easement. The Conservation Commission approved this waiver request per the details stated in the letter dated August 4, 2008, to Ms. Addie Roberts, Chairman of the Washington Planning Commission from Mr. Kelly Boling. Ms. Payne said that she would compose a letter of approval.

Motion: to approve the Camp Windgauge LLP waiver request per the details stated in the letter dated August 4th from Open Space Equity, by Joe Gitterman, seconded by Phil Markert, passed 5-0.

Conservation Easement Model:

Mr. Boling stated that he reviewed the Conservation Easement Model with the Planning Commission. He

has received feedback via email from the Planning Commission. He has sent the draft to the Inlands/Wetlands Commission and has not received any feedback. He will be attending their next meeting. Mr. Boling stated that he would like to consult with David Miles (Washington Town Counsel) with in the next month.

Ridgeline Protection:

Linda Frank stated that she would like to talk with Mike Ajello in the Land Use Office, Inland/Wetlands Commission, Zoning, and other area towns to figure out how to approach educating people about clearing forest on steep slopes. She would then be able to come back with something more detailed. Mr. Markert, Ms. Payne and Mr. Boling suggested that Ms. Frank contact Connecticut Conference of Municipalities.

Management and Monitoring of Town Properties:

Ms. Frank stated that the goal of the C.C. was to monitor the eased properties of the town. She knows that Steep Rock has to monitor their properties annually as part of the agreement. Ms. Payne said that the eased properties should be monitored. Ms. Frank asked about using Google Earth as a tool. Ms. Payne stated that it is unsure how frequent the maps on Maps Live and Google Earth are updated. Mr. Boling stated that it is a good tool but not a substitute for monitoring the land. He also expressed that Planning has mentioned there should be baseline documentation on the procedures of monitoring eased property. Ms. Payne said that easements should be marked and maybe they should revisit this topic.

Other Business:

Ms. Payne referred to the minutes of the June 23rd Zoning Commission meeting. The minutes discussed a possible revision of preservation of stone walls. The minutes state that Mike Ajello said that this issue is usually dealt with a town ordinance. It was suggested that the issue be referred to the Conservation Commission for further investigation. No one has formally approach the Commission but Ms. Payne stated that it is a good topic for this commission to look at.

Open Space:

Ms. Payne stated that in the best interest of communication, she invited the Open Space Committee to the Conservation Commission Meeting when there is a discussion of parcel review so that everyone will have input on developing the short list of properties to look at. She announced Mr. Charles LaMunier has resigned from the Open Space Committee. Ms. Payne distributed a handout titled Washington Open Space Committee, Communicating with the Community about Open Space. Ms. Payne said the Greenprint maps, parcel map, and natural resource maps are tools that can be used. Mr. Boling stated that committee members and commissioners can go to litchfieldgreenprint.org to look at the maps. All in attendance agree that the criteria for the parcel are subjective. Mr. Gitterman asked what the purpose of discussing property that is not for sale. Ms. Payne stated that the Commission is looking at property that is on the market. Mr. Boling stated that there are parcels that fit criteria of some of the members but not all are in agreement. Mr. Markert stated that he believes that the variables need to be reduced in order for a parcel to be approved. He believes there are three groups: 1. People with financial problems and do not want anything that will increase the MIL rate. 2. People that think it is great to have Open Space and are not concerned with the MIL rate. 3. People that question the need for more open space when their kids cannot afford to live here. He feels that if you bring group 2 & 3 together there will be less objections. All are in agreement that the "perfect" property does not exist. Ms. Frank stated that maybe they should agree as a commission what they want to protect, for example, water, views, etc. Mr. Boling stated that he believes that proposals should be solicited.

6:10 pm

Linda Frank, Phil Markert exit. Ms. Payne seats Ric Sonder.

6:13 pm

Commissioners and Committee members discussed the tax benefits and property value with a conservation easement. They discussed the possibility of putting a two page section in the town newsletter educating the residents on conservation from the tax point of view. Mr. Boling stated that maybe they could do their own mailing. Mr. Gitterman stated that the town newsletter is more read. Ms. Payne said that she would ask to have the two page spread in the town newsletter. Ms. Payne stated that the commissioners and members should regroup and rephrase how we talk about potential properties.

There was a suggestion that Open Space meets at the beginning of the Conservation Commission meeting

Motion: to adjourn the meeting by Joe Gitterman, seconded by Kelly Boling, passed 5-0.

Susan Payne adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

FILED SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

Respectfully submitted,
Shelley White
Land Use Clerk