

# September 7, 2005

**Present:** Susan Payne, Chairperson, Phillip Markert

**Alternates:** Linda Frank, Daniel Sherr

**Guests:** First Selectman Richard Sears

**Members are asked to email (conservation@washingtonct.org) or call Pam at (868-0423) if you can not attend a meeting.**

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

Alternates Linda Frank and Dan Sherr were seated.

**MOTION: approval of the minutes of the August 3, 2005 meeting of the Washington Conservation Commission, Linda Frank made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 3rd meeting, Dan Sherr seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

Susan Payne informed members that at a Town Meeting on August 30th it was approved to amend the Ordinance establishing an Open Space and Land Acquisition Fund to allow the Board of Selectmen, upon the recommendation of the Chairman of the Conservation Commission, the authority to spend up to \$6,000, per potential acquisition for expenses incurred in investigation as to the suitability of land for acquisition by the Town of Washington.

**MOTION: to allow the Chairman of the Conservation Commission, on behalf of the Conservation Commission, the authority to recommend that the Board of Selectmen spend up to 6,000, per potential acquisition, for expenses incurred in investigation as to the suitability of land for acquisition by the Town of Washington, was made by Linda Frank, seconded by Dan Sherr and passed unanimously.**

## **Referrals or new projects:**

**Myfield/7 Mygatt Road:** Members looked at the new Inland/Wetlands proposal which moved the proposed construct out of the wetlands area. The project proposes seven single-family houses, a barn containing three affordable apartments, a parking barn and supporting infrastructure. Dan Sherr read the project narrative. Members felt this plan was far better than the last application, an improvement.

**Review of Natural Resource Inventory Report's recommendations to select projects for implementation:** Susan Payne reminded members to review their NRIR.

**Town-initiated Open Space Preservation:** A memo from the Conservation Commission to Addie Roberts, Chairman of the Planning Commission, Mark Picton, Chairman of the Inland/Wetlands Commission, Mike Ajello, Zoning and Inland/Wetlands Enforcement Officer, Janet Hill, Land-Use Coordinator and the Board of Selectman about Town-Initiated Open Space has received no feed back. Susan Payne asked Dick Sears, First Selectman if this topic could be brought up at the next Chairman's meeting. Mr. Sears agreed. Phil Markert brought up the informational session that Susan Payne, George Bender and he had about this subject. Phil will send Dan Sherr a copy of his memo.

**The Depot Study:** The report is not in yet. Dick Sears told members that the upcoming Town Newsletter will have information in it and added that Phase I of this study will take a year to complete; there will be

more opportunities for feed back.

### **Subcommittee Reports:**

**Open Space Committee:** Dan Sherr reported that they were pushing forward to finalize the Ordinance which allowed for tax relief for permanently preserved open space and focused on bringing it to the Town Meeting in October. On Tuesday September 6th Dan presented the proposed ordinance to the Planning Commission and did not receive unanimity. Dan is going to report back to the Open Space Committee that there is a need for more lobbying and education before bringing the proposal to a Town Meeting, his goal is now the spring and not the October Town Meeting. Susan Payne felt part of the problem was that Jack Field's Open Space Plan was never vetted outside their own committee. Dan Sherr came away with three points of view from the Planning Commission: 1) PA490 is not inappropriate to provide permanent protection; it was intended for non-permanent protection. 2) The proposed ordinance is counter to the thrust to maintain active farming and encourages people not to keep farming. 3) People should put permanent easements on their property because it is the right thing to do and not for the tax benefit. Mr. Sherr also thought that the Planning Commission felt caught in the middle with the ordinance transferring applicants to the Open Space Committee. He also got the sense that some Planning members felt that the Open Space Steering Committee took liberties with their conclusions and there wasn't fair representation. Dan still feels that PA490 for open space with permanent protection is good and will continue his work. There needs to be more conversation with the Board of Selectman and the Planning Commission. First Selectman, Dick Sears felt there are unanswered questions, there is the need to weight the gains and losses, is this only for the rich and what about the middle income property owner? Dan will report back to the Open Space Committee and they will decide if they will go forward with the proposal.

**Ridgeline Protection:** Linda Frank circulated a memo from the meeting on August 31st with Gary Fitzherbert, Zoning Commission, Phil Markert, Ric Saunders, Mike Ajello, Zoning Enforcement Officer and herself that had suggested language for definition of areas that require protection of view-shed. Phil noted that he recollected that property over 850' would automatically require a site plan. The site plan triggers a review. During their conversation Linda felt that all were in agreement that it was better to tweak the existing Zoning Regulations rather than add ridgeline regulations. They will meet again and have more discussion. Ms. Frank reported that the Zoning Commission did amend their regulations to measure building heights from pre existing grade.

**Archaeological Resources Protection:** no report **Land Use Data Management:** no report

**Greenway:** Susan Payne distributed the "Points of Interest Trail Guide" for the Greenway. There will be a notice in the upcoming Town Newsletter and Susan will work on a press release for the newspapers. Ms. Payne went on to say that 2000 guides were printed and will be available at the Town Hall, Hickory Stick Bookshop and Gunn Memorial Library. Greenway is having a work day on October 22nd. Susan once again praised Bob Williams for his work on the Greenway. Kudos to Bob!

**Management and Monitoring of Town properties:** Linda Frank passed out packets for monitoring to members present. Pam Osborne, Secretary will mail packets to members not present. Members are asked to monitor their properties this fall, by November and then get on schedule to monitor every spring. Linda Frank and Susan Payne will check out the new easements on the Davenport property on Dark Entry Road and the Sheinfeld property on Lower Churchill.

**Scenic Road:** no report

**Canoe Brook:** Pam Osborne, Secretary checked with the First Selectman about progress on Canoe Brook. First Selectman, Dick Sears told Pam that they have gone through the permit process with Inland/Wetlands and are working on the funds.

**Cell Tower Update:** no activity

**Flora & Fauna:** no report

**Water Resources Monitoring and Protection:** no activity

**Other Business:** none

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

**Next scheduled meeting of the Washington Conservation Commission is October 5, 2005 at 5:00pm.**

Submitted subject to approval,

Pamela L. Osborne, Secretary