**TOWN OF WASHINGTON**

**Bryan Memorial Town Hall**

**Washington Depot, CT**

**PLANNING COMMISSION**

**MINUTES**

January 6, 2016

7:30 p.m. Main Level Meeting Room

**Members Present:** Mr. Frank, Mr. Carey, Mr. Rimsky, Ms. Jahnke

**Alternates Present:** Ms. Ryland, Mr. Bedini, Mr. Hileman

**Staff Present:** Mrs. Hill, Ms. Pennell

**Others Present:** Mr. Picton, Mr. Sherr, Mr. Charles, Atty.

Kelly, Mr. Neff

Mr. Frank called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

**Seated:** Mr. Frank, Ms. Jahnke, Mr. Carey, Mr. Rimsky, and Mr. Hileman

**Consideration of the Minutes:**

The Commission considered the minutes of the December 2, 2015 Planning Commission Meeting.

**Motion:**  To accept the December 2, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Planning Commission by Mr. Carey, seconded by Ms. Jahnke, passed by 5-0.

**New Application:**

**Ingrassia/292 Bee Brook Road/6 Lot Subdivision:**

Mr. Brian Neff, engineer, presented the plans dated 8/24/15, revised 12-16-15, “Site Development Feasibility Plan

(8 sheets). Mr. Neff gave a brief explanation of the plans for a six lot subdivision, stating that at the Public Hearing there would be a more in depth presentation of all information.

Mrs. Hill’s 01/06/16 application review was circulated. Mrs. Hill noted that Health Department approval is still pending and it also needs to be referred to the Conservation Commission and the Fire Marshal. With regard to the “Town of Washington State Archeologist Sensitivity Map” dated 2/2010, Mrs. Hill noted a large portion of the property appears to be of significance to the State Archeologist. The Commission reviewed the map. Mrs. Hill asked if this application should be referred to the State Archeologist, although this is not required by the current Subdivision Regulations. Atty. Jim Kelly, for the applicant, stated that he feels his client would support the referral to the State Archeologist. All were in agreement to make this referral.

Mrs. Hill referred to Section 11.4.5 of the current Zoning Regulations, which states that two interior lots and a third lot, if it has frontage, can share a single driveway on an accessway. This plan calls for three frontage lots to share a driveway. Mrs. Hill stated that when the Zoning Commission held its last Revision of Zoning Regulations Subcommittee meeting, she recommended that the word “interior” be deleted so that three lots of any combination can share a driveway. The Subcommittee agreed with this, but Mrs. Hill noted that the regulation changes are still in process and have not been adopted.

Mr. Frank stated that Planning is not able to approve a subdivision if it does not satisfy the Zoning Regulations. Atty. Kelly stated he feels this does satisfy the Zoning Regulations in that the requirement that allows for two interior lots and a single frontage lot is a maximum ratio for access to interior lot. He further stated any two frontage lots can choose to share a driveway. Atty. Kelly did not think that a revision of this Zoning regulation was needed in order that three frontage lots share a driveway. Mr. Frank stated this is a question for the Zoning Commission to address.

Atty. Kelly asked the Commission to seek counsel to address the question whether or not the proposed accessways and driveways comply with the Zoning Regulations. If not, Atty. Kelly stated his clients would respect that and do what they need to do to comply. Mr. Frank stated the application has been accepted and is being processed. Mr. Frank stated they are not scheduling a Public Hearing until they have answers to the Zoning questions, but would like to schedule a site visit. The Commission scheduled a site inspection for January 11, 2016 at 1:30 p.m. The Conservation Commission Chairman, Susan Payne, will be notified. Mr. Frank stated that this application will be put on the agenda for the next Planning Commission meeting.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

**Sustainability Subcommittee Report:**

Mr. Chris Charles and Mr. Mark Picton, members of the Sustainability Subcommittee, were present to report on the subcommittee’s progress. Mr. Picton began by discussing the Sustainability Subcommittee’s plan dated 12/31/15 (draft) and the Subcommittee’s vision. Mr. Rimsky and Mr. Picton both noted that the efforts of the Depot Plaza Improvement Committee must be integrated with those of the Sustainability Subcommittee in order to work together to share ideas and information. Mr. Picton stated this will allow for a cohesive move towards sustainability, as well as assuring a natural flow from the Plaza into whatever plans will come to be for the adjacent areas. Mr. Rimsky stated that when the Plaza Committee presents a design for the Plaza, this design needs to allow for second and third phases so that future plans for the Depot can be implemented.

Mr. Picton addressed Mr. Bedini’s question with respect to the need to establish rules and regulations for sustainability. He stated that the sustainability framework identified in the Plan of Conservation and Development should be incorporated into Town policies, practices, and land use regulations. He went on to state that a review of Town regulations was needed to be sure they are consistent with sustainability planning. Mr. Picton stated a review would include economic development issues to make sure they are consistent with the vision of a sustainable town and also would include a review of all Town resources (biological, geophysical, cultural, social, and economic resources).

Mr. Frank distributed to the Commission members drafts of the letters proposed to be sent by the Sustainability Subcommittee to the Board of Education and the First Selectman. Mr. Charles clarified that Planning’s approval of these letters would enable the Sustainability Subcommittee to go to other committees, the Board of Education, etc. to request information and to be able to provide input and feedback. Regarding plans for the new AG-STEM facility, Mr. Hileman encouraged the Sustainability Subcommittee to get involved with the Board of Education and attend its meetings, as the BOE allows for public comment. It was the consensus of the Commissioners to endorse the letters.

Mr. Frank referred to Ms. Gager’s recommendation at the last meeting that the Subcommittee come up with three immediate projects, be specific about what needs to be done, and explain how they would be paid for. Mr. Picton replied that the projects include the Plaza Improvements, the AG-STEM School planning, and developing an Identity/Brand/Vision for the Town. Mr. Charles added if sustainable standards are established for the Town,(energy conservation, limited impact development, etc.), then we can invite the private sector to adhere to them and to develop higher standards on their own.

Discussion ensued with respect to possible incentives for the community to be involved and active in supporting the vision and goals of the Sustainability Subcommittee. Mr. Charles noted that there are other towns in the State of Connecticut that are exploring these ideas and adopting incentives. Mr. Picton gave examples of how to encourage people to establish sustainable standards.

Mr. Picton referenced his draft dated 11/28/15 entitled “What Would a Farm Enterprise Incubator Look Like in Washington”, which is a prime example of what a major sustainability initiative in Washington might be. He stated that supporting local agriculture is one of the first things that comes to mind when one thinks of sustainability. Members of the Commission agreed that this is an excellent example and an important part of this effort with sustainability.

The Commission thanked the Sustainability Subcommittee for all its efforts and information shared.

**Economic Development Advisory Committee Report:**

Mr. Hileman stated the committee met on January 5, 2016. He reported that Goman and York is no longer employed by the Town of Washington. Mr. Hileman stated the committee will be moving forward and the One Eleven Group, (which is the communications/public relations firm that Goman and York subcontracted ), has expressed its desire to continue with this project and work with the Town. Mr. Hileman reported that the One Eleven Group did provide some tangible benefits to the Town in the several months it has been engaged in the project.

Mr. Hileman informed the Commission that Dan Sherr and Tony Bedini have put together a proposal for the Committee as to how to best utilize the remaining funds that the Town had appropriated for economic development work.

Mr. Hileman stated that overall without Goman and York, the committee will move forward, but at a slower pace than what the Planning Commission had hoped for.

**Economic Development Subcommittee Report**:

Mr. Sherr spoke concerning the vision of the Economic Development Subcommittee and proposals for the use of funds allocated to continue the advancement of these initiatives. Suggested proposals were discussed. Mr. Sherr stated that the Connecticut Economic Resource Center is willing to come to the Town and conduct a municipal economic workshop with the Economic Development Advisory Committee and public officials. This will be tentatively scheduled for the last week in April 2016.

Discussion continued regarding the long term goals for the Town, which commissions should be involved, and what needs to be focused on to meet the best interest/needs of the community. Mr. Sherr and members of the Commission shared their thoughts and ideas on how to create a community with a healthier future, including housing, economic entrepreneurial activity, job creation, etc.

Mr. Hileman, Ms. Ryland and Mr. Rimsky shared discussion with respect to the Town’s population, what is happening with surrounding towns, and what ideally is the best direction to move in with regard to Town of Washington to meet the desires of the residents of the community and what they identify with in the community. Mr. Hileman stated that the mission of the plan here is to restore and revitalize the village centers of Washington. Mr. Sherr noted the importance of this creative exchange in achieving the economic goals of the Town.

Mr. Frank thanked Mr. Sherr, Mr. Bedini and all those involved with this subcommittee for their work in pursuing its goals.

**Plaza Improvement Committee Report:**

Mr. Rimsky reported that the Committee has not met and a meeting needs to be scheduled to discuss the two preliminary projected plans that have been prepared. In reply to Commission members’s questioning, Mr. Rimsky noted that a meeting will be set by First Selectman Lyon. Mr. Bedini asked Mr. Rimsky if there is a schedule for the meetings and Mr. Rimsky replied that there was not. Consensus of the members was that a schedule of meetings and appropriate notification to the public is necessary so that any individuals wishing to attend such meetings can review the documents and have input. Mr. Picton added that it is important that this be available to the people of the Town, as well as the Sustainability Subcommittee.

**Election of Officers**:

**Motion**: To nominate and elect Paul Frank as Chairman, by

Mr. Carey, seconded by Ms. Jahnke, passed 5-0.

Mr. Frank noted that his term expires at the end of 2016 and he plans to retire at that time.

**Motion:** To nominate and elect Wayne Hilemanas Vice Chairman, by Mr. Frank, seconded by Mr. Rimsky, passed 5-0.

Mr. Frank stated that Mr. Hileman’s election will be effective upon his being elevated to regular member at the next Board of Selectmen meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**:

**Motion**: To adjourn at 9:40 p.m., by Mr. Frank, seconded by

Mr. Hileman.

**SUBMITTED SUBJECT TO APPROVAL:**

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Donna Pennell, Land Use Secretary

January 13, 2016