**TOWN OF WASHINGTON**

**Bryan Memorial Town Hall**

**Washington Depot, CT**

**PLANNING COMMISSION**

**MINUTES**

February 3, 2016

7:30 p.m. Main Level Meeting Room

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

**Alternates Present:** Ms. Ryland

**Alternates Absent:** Mr. Bedini

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

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

Kelly, Mr. Neff, Ms. Audette

Mr. Frank called the meeting to order at 7:34 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 January 6, 2016 Planning Commission meeting.

**Motion:**  To accept the January 6, 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Planning Commission as submitted. By Mr. Carey, seconded by Mr. Hileman, passed by 5-0 vote.

Minutes from the Site Inspection at 292 Bee Brook Road/6 Lot Subdivision will be considered at the next Planning Commission meeting.

**Pending Application:**

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

Mr. Brian Neff, engineer, noted the Commission’s site visit to the property on January 11, 2016. Mrs. Hill said she had sent the report from the State Archeologist to Atty. Kelly, who noted he will be calling the State Archeologist, Mr. Brian Jones, as he does have questions and would like more information from him. Mr. Rimsky asked what Mr. Jones feels is of interest with regard to this property. Mrs. Hill stated Mr. Jones is concerned with protecting the existing old stone walls and stone structures. Mr. Frank said Jones’ primary concern is with an area near a proposed shared driveway in favor of lots 2 and 6 crossing a knoll that is considered to have very high archeological sensitivity and he recommends a Phase 1(B) Archeological Reconnaissance Survey be conducted for this area.

Mr. Frank asked Mr. Neff if he had any involvement with the construction of the existing bridge. Mr. Neff stated he designed the bridge about ten plus years ago. He further reported that the bridge was approved by the Inland Wetlands Commission, as well as the Department of Transportation and noted these approvals are in the file. Mr. Neff gave the description of how the bridge was constructed, being approved for a H20 rating, which allows for the largest vehicle allowed on the road to cross over it. Mr. Frank asked what the bridge’s usage was intended for. Mr. Neff explained how there was no viable access to the property and another bridge elsewhere on the property had washed out many years ago. Mr. Neff stated that this bridge was to serve as an accessway to a future subdivision, allowing for two lanes of traffic.

Mr. Carey inquired as to what the Conservation Commission’s comments were about the cash payment proposed by the applicant in lieu of open space. Chairman of the Conservation Commission, Susan Payne, reported that the Commission had voted unanimously to recommend an open space set aside to protect the eastern side of Bee Brook, along with the Northeast corner wetlands on Lot 1.

Ms. Ryland asked Mr. Picton’s view on the Conservation Commission’s recommendations. Mr. Picton referenced the email he sent to Mrs. Hill dated 01-29-16, expressing his support for an open space set aside for a natural scenic corridor. Mr. Picton feels that the Zoning Regulation 12.1.2 for setbacks from Bee Brook does not provide enough protection to keep this a natural corridor. He feels a cash contribution can’t be equated to the functions provided by this streambelt, especially given the way such contributions are calculated for fees in lieu of open space set aside. Mr. Neff referenced map dated 08/24/15, revision date 12/16/15, “Site Development Feasibility Plan”, addressing questions from the Commission regarding setbacks and easements. Mrs. Hill stated that in the 2003 Plan of Conservation and Development there is a map showing potential future for connecting open space with greenways. Mrs. Hill suggested the Commission check to see if this area is on the map. Mr. Frank stated they will do that and address this at the next Planning Commission meeting.

**Motion:** To schedule a Public Hearing on the matter of

Ingrassia/292 Bee Brook Road/6 Lot Subdivision for Wednesday, March 2, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. at the main floor meeting room, Bryan Memorial Town Hall, Washington Depot, CT. By Mr. Frank, seconded by Mr. Hileman, passed by 5-0 vote.

**Motion:** To waive compliance with the requirement of Section 3.4.3 of the Subdivision Regulations requiring posting a sign at the premises relating to the Public Hearing on Ingrassia/ 292 Bee Brook Road/6 Lot Subdivision, since the Commission no longer provides such signage. By Mr. Frank, seconded by Mr. Hileman, passed by 5-0 vote.

With regard to accessways, driveways and rights of way proposed for this subdivision, Mr. Frank believes this is a matter for the Zoning Commission to review and comment as these are Zoning Regulations they are examining. Mr. Frank and Mr. Hileman noted that the Subdivision Regulations state that all subdivision plans shall conform to the Town Zoning Regulations in effect upon receipt of a subdivision application. Mr. Frank referenced Section 3.3 of the Subdivision Regulations that states the Commission may forward the application to the appropriate departments and the Commission may ask for comments from other agencies. The Commission members were in agreement to request the Zoning Commission to review this application for compliance with the Zoning Regulations.

**Motion:** Pursuant to Sections 1.4 and 3.3 of the Subdivision Regulations, to forward the Ingrassia/292 Bee Brook Road/6 Lot Subdivision application to the Zoning Commission for the Town of Washington for their review and comment on conformity of the subdivision plan to the Town’s Zoning Regulations with particular reference to matters relating to accessways, driveways and rights of way. By Mr. Frank, seconded by Mr. Hileman, passed by 5-0 vote.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

**Plan of Conservation and Development:**

**Sustainability Subcommittee Report:**

Ms. Jahnke reported that the subcommittee met on Monday, February 1, 2016. Ms. Jahnke questioned who can be appointed as members to the Sustainability Subcommittee and how that process would work. Mr. Frank stated they should be appointed by the Planning Commission, can be members of the public and do not need to reside in the town. Mr. Frank advised Ms. Jahnke that she would just need to present the names to the Commission for appointment and that they do not necessarily have to be present at a meeting. Ms. Ryland expressed her desire to be on the Sustainability Subcommittee and the Commission members were in favor of this.

Ms. Jahnke informed the Commission that the Subcommittee now has its own page on the Town Website. She inquired about guidelines as to what they can and cannot post. Mr. Frank clarified that anything being posted would go through Mrs. Hill and then posted to the website.

Mr. Picton reported that he had sent a report regarding the concerns of the Sustainability Subcommittee about the proposed plaza improvements to that committee and that he had contacted Mr. Cava, Chairman of the building committee of the Region 12 Board of Education, relating to construction for the STEM Program.

**Economic Development Advisory Committee Report:**

Mr. Hileman reported that the Committee held a well attended workshop February 2, 2016. Mr. Hileman noted that One Eleven, as well as Goman and York, were no longer working for the Town.

The Committee plans on doing another workshop in April. Mr. Hileman stated others have stepped forward who want to participate in the work of this Committee. Mr. Sherr informed the Commission that the Committee has a list of things it would like to get done between now and June and funding is available for this. He added they are looking at other resources that can be brought in to replicate what Goman and York promised. These resources are low fee or no fee and many are sponsored by the State. Mr. Sherr said one resource is the Connecticut Economic Resources Center (CERC), which has proposals for both short and long term projects. Mr. Sherr stated a town events calendar is up and running on the Town of Washington website, as well as a blog posting and a Facebook page

Mr. Sherr stated that he and Mr. Picton will be meeting with CERC to discuss CERC’s participation in workshop 4 scheduled for April 28, 2016. Mr. Sherr would like them to walk the Committee through the process that they have used for other municipalities to explore the long range vision of where the Town should go with respect to economic development.

Mr. Sherr and Mr. Picton stated they had attended a Northwest Hills Council of Governments “Economic Development Summit” at South Farms in Morris, CT. This event included service providers for the towns in the northwest corner, discussing economic, cultural and social services they provide for communities. In response to Mr. Frank’s question, Mr. Sherr stated these are organizations which can be hired for low cost or no cost.

Mr. Charles stated he and Mr. Picton attended a Farm Forum on January 30, 2016. Mr. Picton explained that this was about encouraging and supporting new farmers and farming enterprises in this region. There were presentations from government agencies, non-profits and farmers themselves. Mr. Charles and Mr. Sherr discussed a proposal for a farm produce food distribution center that is moving forward in Torrington. This is led by a very well established group with a lot of momentum.

**Plaza Improvement Committee Report:**

Mr. Rimsky stated a meeting was held on 02/01/16 with TPA Design Group to review TPA’s draft proposals. He reported the discussion included design elements beyond the constraints of the budget to allow what should be done in the next two years to tie into what will be done in the next ten years. Mr. Rimsky discussed the importance of the plaza project being done in phases so as not to disrupt the businesses in the Depot.

Mr. Frank inquired what the plaza would look like with the current proposal in place. Mr. Rimsky stated there would be vertical parking encroaching somewhat onto the Town Hall lawn, sidewalk improvement on both sides, bump outs for protection for those parked cars and traffic calming, and the installation of new drainage and filtration facilities. Mr. Rimsky spoke at length regarding parking design, issues with River Road, drainage, paving, construction and engineering costs. Based upon the feedback at the Committee meeting, TPA will present revised proposal.

**Referral from the Zoning Commission/Revision of the Zoning Regulations:**

Mr. Frank asked Mrs. Hill to describe the general nature of these proposed changes in the Regulations. Mrs. Hill stated the revision process began three years ago with the goal for the first phase to quickly address necessary correction, difficulties with implementing the regulations, meeting changed requirements of State law, etc. This is the second installment of this initial review. More controversial issues will be addressed next in this process. Mr. Frank has asked Ms. Ryland to take the lead in reviewing the proposed revisions. Ms. Ryland has been asked to focus on any possible conflicts with the Plan of Conservation and Development.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

Mr. Picton’s email dated 01/29/16 with regard to the Ingrassia application, as discussed earlier in the meeting (referenced above)was noted.

Chairman of the Conservation Commission, Susan Payne, did submit a brief note following today’s Conservation Committee meeting with the recommendation with regard to the Ingrassia application, as discussed earlier in the meeting (referenced above).

**2016-2017 Budget:**

The spreadsheet with budget information was distributed and reviewed by Mr. Frank.

**ADJOURNMENT**:

**Motion**: To adjourn the meeting at 9:08 p.m. By Mr. Rimsky,

seconded by Mr. Hileman, passed by 5-0 vote.

**SUBMITTED SUBJECT TO APPROVAL:**

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Donna Pennell, Land Use Secretary

February 5, 2016