**TOWN OF WASHINGTON**

**Bryan Memorial Town Hall**

**Washington Depot, CT**

**PLANNING COMMISSION**

**MINUTES**

March 2, 2016

7:30 p.m. Main Level Meeting Room

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

**Members Absent:** Mr. Hileman

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

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

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

Mr. Neff, Ms. Audette, Mr. Griffith, Mr.

Undergraff

Mr. Frank called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

**Public Hearing**:

Pending Application:

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

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

Mr. Frank noted the legal notice for this application was

published in Voices and read the legal notice aloud. Mr.

Frank also stated there are a list of documents that are in

the file and that these documents are available for the

public to view.

Mr. Brian Neff, professional engineer, presented referring to

the map for “Final Subdivision Plan” dated 12/16/15, prepared by John M. Farnsworth & Associates, showing the 52.794 acre property. He stated the property is proposed for six lots; five lots are regular frontage lots and one is an interior lot. Mr. Neff stated the properties utilize the existing bridge that crosses Bee Brook. This bridge was built fourteen years ago and is a double wide two-lane bridge that Mr. Neff designed himself. Mr. Neff obtained permits from the Inland/Wetlands Commission and the Department of Transportation for construction of this bridge. He stated it has an H20 load rating, reinforced concrete abutments, reinforced concrete deck and steel beams. Mr. Neff stated the bridge is suitable for any vehicle with an H20 rating, including tri-axles and all emergency vehicles. At the time it was designed, it was designed with the idea of having a private road going to the property. Mr. Neff explained that Bee Brook runs along the entire perimeter of this property and seemed to be a wise decision to have this bridge used for a good access way to this property. He further explained that currently this is the single access way to all the lots, allowing the area along Bee Brook to remain undisturbed. Mr. Neff stated they will be utilizing this shared driveway, crossing the bridge and sharing two sets of driveways that go into the interior of the property. Mr. Neff stated there are two lots located down near Bee Brook Road and four lots are on top of the hill, accessed by two shared driveways that go up the hill. Mr. Neff stated he feels this makes the most sense to share this bridge between the lots and will offer the least disturbance to the river. Mr. Neff noted that the location of the bridge was the best location with respect to site lines and the speed limit of this road.

Mr. Neff continued to explain the layout of the property and answered questions from the Commission.

Mr. Neff reported that the plan was approved by Wetlands, septic areas for all lots have been approved by the Health Department. A Site Feasibility Plan showing entire parcel detail has been prepared. Mr. Neff stated soil erosion control plans have been set up for when construction begins. They have also prepared a storm water plan, showing details of how storm water is handled on the site. Mr. Neff believes this to be a good design in terms of planning, preservation of natural resources and protection of wetlands. Mr. Neff did note that there are still Zoning issues with regard to Zoning Regulations and that is currently being addressed.

Mr. Frank asked Mr. Neff what the nature of the proposed use of this property is. Mr. Neff replied stating that is being proposed as a Subdivision for individual single family dwellings and this is what is shown on the plans. Mr. Neff stated individual houses will be on each site, individual wells, septic systems and driveway accesses. Mr. Neff noted that this is allowed for in this zoning district and is the standard proposal for a regular residential subdivision.

Mr. Frank asked if there were any plans for construction at this site. Mr. Neff replied not at this time. Mr. Frank inquired as to the age of this bridge and requested Mr. Neff give a statement noting this bridge remains adequate for the proposed purpose. Mr. Neff stated it is a 14 year old bridge and feels this bridge is in very good condition. He stated he recently inspected it and there is no deterioration of the steel, feels that this is a substantial bridge, exceeds the H20 requirement and has been approved by the Department of Transportation. At the request of Mr. Frank, Mr. Neff will provide a written statement for the file regarding the bridge being suitable for this proposed usage.

Mr. Frank asked if the Commission or Public had any questions. An owner of property abutting the Ingrassia’s, Mr. John Updegraff of 320 Bee Brook Road, posed the question that if this plan is approved and after a couple years the Ingrassias decide to build, is there a subsequent process for the houses to be properly positioned, wells drilled properly, etc. Mr. Neff stated the Ingrassias would have to go through the series of permit processes and explained permits that would be necessary, as well as go through Inland-Wetlands Commission.

Mr. Carey asked Mr. Neff if there were any immediate plans for the Ingrassias to build or market these sites. Atty. Jim Kelly, attorney for the applicant, interjected to answer this question. Atty. Kelly stated yes there are plans and the planned usages are not specific at this time. Atty. Kelly stated there is a list of usages in the R1 zone permitted as of right, as well as an additional uses requiring special permits in Zoning Regulations. Atty. Kelly explained this process in more detail for the Commission and Public.

Mr. Carey inquired as to the design of the interior driveways and if there has been any drafts of maintenance responsibilities for future co-users of these driveways. Atty. Kelly stated there will be a shared maintenance agreement where each of the lots having a right to use it will share proportionally in the expense of maintaining this bridge and driveways.

Mr. Mark Picton asked if there was any open space proposed. Mr. Neff stated no. Mr. Frank explained that there has been a request to the Planning Commission. He stated that Planning Subdivision Regulations requires 15% set aside for open space purposes, but offers an alternative of a cash payment from the applicant to the Town in lieu of a set aside. Mr. Frank stated this is up to the Commission to decide. Mr. Frank further noted that the Conservation Commission recommended to the Planning Commission to designate that the corridor along Bee Brook be set aside for open space and the area located on the Wetlands area of the Northeast portion shown on the map also be put aside for open space. Mr. Frank stated this involves about 7.5 acres. Mr. Picton added that he suggested to the Commission that open space be set aside rather than a cash payment. Mr. Picton would like Bee Brook corridor to be set aside so that it will remain a natural corridor in its natural state. Mr. Picton noted that he has his views on this matter are on the record in the file.

Atty. Kelly mentioned his attendance at the Zoning Commission’s last meeting and hopes that the Commission will reach a conclusion at their next scheduled meeting. Mr. Frank asked Atty. Kelly to briefly discuss with the Commission members and Public the situation that exists with regard to the Zoning Commission Regulations dealing with driveways and accessways. Mrs. Hill noted that the Zoning Commission would be referring these questions to its legal counsel. Mr. Frank noted that Subdivision Regulations state that the Planning Commission cannot approve a subdivision that does not conform with Zoning Regulations, but that all parties are trying to get these questions at hand resolved as expeditiously as possible.

Mr. Frank referred the question of the Health Department’s approval for septic systems for these lots. Mr. Neff stated that five out of the six lots will need an engineered septic system designed due to elevated ground water levels and/or ledge, which in turn requires engineered septic design. This engineering is a safeguard on the Health Department’s part. Mr. Frank inquired if the Inland-Wetlands Commission imposed any conditions and Mr. Neff and Mrs. Hill stated it did not.

Mrs. Hill clarified that the purpose of the subdivision plan is to prove that each one of these lots proposed is developable. Mrs. Hill stated that even if the plan was labeled “Final Subdivision Plan”, each property owner as they developed the lot would have to come into file necessary paperwork with the Land Use Office to secure necessary approvals.

Mr. Neff noted in reply to public question that no blasting will be necessary for well drilling or the installation of septic systems. Mr. Neff stated engineered system will be elevated above ground.

Mr. Frank also noted for the record that this matter has been referred to the Fire Marshal for review.

**Motion:** To continue the Public Hearing on the matter of Ingrassia/292 Bee Brook Road/6 Lot Subdivision to Wednesday, April 6, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. at the main floor meeting room, Bryan Memorial Town Hall, Washington Depot, CT. By Mr. Rimsky, seconded by Mr. Frank, passed by 5-0 vote.

**Regular meeting**:

Seated: Mr. Carey, Mr. Rimsky, Mrs. Jahnke, Mr. Frank, Mr.

Bedini

**Privilege of the Floor:**

N/A

**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. Rimsky, passed by 5-0 vote.

**Special Meeting – Ingrassia Site Inspection-1/11/16**: This will be discussed at the next Planning Commission meeting on April 6, 2016 due to computer problems with getting the report prepared for this meeting.

**Motion:** Request to waive the Regulation 4.4.11 for State Plane Coordinates for Ingrassia/292 Bee Brook Road/6 Lot Subdivision. By Mr. Frank, seconded by Mr. Carey, passed

by 5-0 vote.

**Other Business**:

**Sustainability Subcommittee Report**:

Mr. Charles and Mr. Picton attended the Plaza Improvement Committee meeting. First Selectman Mark Lyon gave permission to the Sustainability Subcommittee to be involved with the Plaza Improvement Committee. Mr. Picton stated the Committee discussed parking in the main plaza and traffic around River Road. Mr. Picton reported they have also implemented plans for surface water, low impact development techniques and they are trying to be responsive to ideas that have been brought up.

Ms. Ryland asked if moving River Road completely was an alternative being discussed at the meeting. Mr. Rimsky stated that it was brought up at the meeting as a potential traffic flow problem if they redirect traffic to River Road and increase congestion on River Road.

Mrs. Hill stated that a year ago she had discussed with Mark Lyon putting in some recharging stations for electric/hybrid vehicles. She believes this is not in the current plan, but stated there is State funding available now and inquired if Planning Commission felt it was a good idea and could state this for the record so that the Sustainability Committee has more authority to request these funds. Mr. Frank stated that the consensus of the Commission is certainly to support this recommendation.

**Plaza Improvement Committee/Sustainability Subcommittee:**

Mr. Rimsky reported that TPA has submitted a second set of preliminary plans. They will be discussed on Monday March 7th or March 14th, (dates not confirmed as yet).

Mr. Rimsky feels that TPA has shown real thoughtfulness in responding to concerns brought up. Mr. Rimsky feels they have done due diligence to address issues. He feels this still comes down to a geometric and economics problem.

Mr. Charles noted that there is an engaged group of people attending meetings and taking part in these discussions. Mr. Picton asked should the Plaza Improvement Committee or Planning Commission ask to have the Northwest Conservation District to be part of reviewing the options for low impact development techniques, as they are the regional experts in low impact development. Mr. Frank stated he feels this would be a Plaza Improvement Committee function. Mr. Picton also sent a letter to Greg Cava, Chairman of the School Building Committee, to ask to be apprised of state of the planning of the Ag-Stem School. Mr. Cava has sent Mr. Picton a set of the conceptual decisions at the current state of discussion.

Since regulations are being revised, Mr. Picton inquired if it is an appropriate time to incorporate low impact development standards in all land use regulations. Mr. Picton also posed the question/recommendation if Zoning and Subdivision regulations undergo a thorough comprehensive alignment with a sustainability framework as specified in Chapter 5 of the Plan for Conservation and Development. Mr. Bedini and Mr. Picton agreed that Inland/Wetlands would be incorporated in this as well.

Mr. Picton noted if the town adopts the idea of a sustainable town business model in conformance with economic vitality and with Land Use Sustainable Planning, that the Economic Development Advisory Committee be requested to make a recommendation that the town renew its relationship with the Northwest Conservation District for the type of consulting services they have been referring to, especially low impact development techniques. Mr. Frank inquired if this has indeed lapsed and Mr. Picton stated it has for 2-3 years. Mr. Charles noted they do provide a lot of good services and the Town should become more aware of what they do and are able to do, as well as the fact that such services can be affordable to the applicant. Mr. Charles noted that the annual membership cost runs about $1100.00 annually. Mr. Charles also pointed out that the Town of Washington is the only town in the area that does not pay dues to the Northwest Conservation District.

Mr. Picton had explanatory documents that they have prepared that detail what the Sustainability Committee is working on. He has sent them to Mrs. Hill, who will have them in her office for anyone who would like to review them. Mr. Picton would like to inquire as to a place at Town Hall where the Committee can post/display what they are working on and better inform the Public. Ms. Ryland will also be looking into the use of resources of the internet as a way to inform the community as well.

**Economic Development Advisory Committee:**

Mr. Bedini reported that the Committee is moving ahead on the process for the creation and installation of road signage identifying the villages and points of interest.

**Referral from the Zoning Commission**:

Ms. Ryland sent out her summary of her review of the proposed summary of changes to the Zoning Regulations. Discussion took place on her review with regard to Traditional Home Enterprises. Mr. Frank requested Commission members to review the summary submitted by Ms. Ryland and the Commission will discuss this at the next scheduled meeting. Ms. Ryland was commended for her work done on her review and summary.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

N/A

**ADJOURNMENT**:

**Motion**: To adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m. By Mr. Rimsky, seconded by Mr. Bedini, passed by 5-0 vote.

**SUBMITTED SUBJECT TO APPROVAL:**

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Donna Pennell, Land Use Secretary

March 8, 2016