**TOWN OF WASHINGTON**

**Bryan Memorial Town Hall**

**Washington Depot, CT**

**PLANNING COMMISSION**

**MINUTES**

August 3, 2016

7:30 p.m. Main Level Meeting Room

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

**Alternates Present:** Mr. Bedini

**Alternates Absent:** Ms. Ryland

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

**Others Present:** First Selectman Mark Lyon, Mr. Charles

**Regular Meeting:**

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

**Seated:** Mr. Frank, Mr. Hileman, Mr. Carey, Mr. Rimsky,

Ms. Jahnke

**Pending Applications**:

N/A

**New Applications:**

N/A

**Privilege of the Floor:**

None noted.

**Consideration of the Minutes:**

The Commission considered the minutes of the July 6, 2016, Planning Commission meeting.

**MOTION:** Motion to accept the minutes from the July 6, 2016

Planning Commission meeting as amended. By Mr. Rimsky

seconded by Mr. Hileman, passed 5-0.

The correction to be made was on page 4, the carry over paragraph from page 3. The sentence reading “This amendment included the change in language this change was acceptable to Commission members” should read, “This amendment included the change in language which was acceptable to Commission members.”

**Other Business**:

**Plan of Conservation and Development:**

Sustainability Subcommittee Report**:**

No report submitted.

Economic Development Advisory Committee Report:

Mr. Hileman reported that CERC has completed the work on the survey and it is on the Town website and the WBA website. He noted that the response has been good. Mr. Hileman stated there will be a mail announcement going out to residents of Washington, as well advising them of the survey on line.

Mr. Hileman stated there was a quarterly committee meeting held on July 28th, which he was unable to attend.

Mr. Hileman stated there was a focus group that met on Saturday, July 30th. He noted that this was a group of full and part time residents who were brought together to gain some feedback on their thoughts concerning this project. CERC was also there for a portion of the session. Mr. Hileman stated he has not obtained feedback from this meeting as yet, as it was just held recently.

Plaza Improvement Committee Report:

Mr. Rimsky reported that a preliminary plan for the plaza was presented at a public hearing on July 20th at Town Hall. He noted about 75 people were in attendance. Mr. Rimsky stated that TPA Design Group has provided good service for the Town, working above and beyond what has been expected of them. Mr. Rimsky stated they had looked at different designs presented, but they continued to come back to the preliminary plan presented at this meeting.

First Selectman Mark Lyon presented the preliminary plan for the plaza. He stated they informed TPA that they wanted to develop a plan that will set the tone for future work in the Depot. Mr. Lyon noted there are six different plaza designs that TPA presented to the Town. In regard to River Road, he noted that TPA, working outside of their contracted work, did conceptual ideas of moving River Road closer to the river, coming out opposite Titus Road.

Mr. Lyon stated that this plan does allow several more parking spaces and the placement of underground infiltrators for storm run-off. He stated the trees on the median islands will offer shade for the pavement, as well as defining a traffic pattern within the plaza. He explained that TPA studied the traffic flow in the plaza, including counting cars that go through the plaza during the course of a day. Mr. Lyon noted it was consensus that the traffic flow currently in the plaza is haphazard and the islands will help define the traffic flow. The Commission members did have questions regarding the infiltrator system, which Mr. Lyon addressed.

Mr. Lyon did note that Public comment is open until August 20, 2016. He stated there have been residents coming in to express their concerns about existing plantings will take place where appropriate. Mr. Lyon stated that transplanting of existing plantings. Mr. Lyon and members discussed what new plantings will be appropriate for the new plaza design. He did note that the median will have new plantings and not be paved.

Mr. Lyon showed the new plans for improved lighting. He stated that these new plans show the lighting that meets the Department of Transportation (DOT) requirement for parking lots and pedestrians. Mr. Lyon has received numerous public comments stating the improved lighting plans are excessive. However, he noted this is what the DOT requires. He has suggested alternative options; one being a request for a waiver of the DOT requirement and two, putting the lighting on timers to control when they are on/off. Discussion continued on the style of the lighting proposed, how it will be downward directed lighting and not excessively high over the street level.

Mr. Lyon showed plans prepared by TPA demonstrating how they went beyond what was asked of them with this project. TPA had drawn up plans which offered an option for a redesign of the existing horseshoe driveway currently in the front of Town Hall. This design would allow for an accessway to the rear parking area of the Town Hall for public parking. The design also included sidewalks for the public to utilize to gain safer access to the rear parking lot and the rear entrance to Town Hall (which now include the handicapped accessible entry).

Mr. Rimsky discussed the beneficial aspects of the median with the cut-throughs for vehicles and pedestrians. He explained how this would spread out the traffic pattern and eliminate congestion, while also allowing for traffic to cut through to the businesses (rather than going to the end of the plaza near River Road to make the turn to get to their destination, reducing conflict with the traffic coming into the Plaza from River Road).

Mr. Lyon explained that the site lines exiting and entering from River Road into the Plaza will be improved. The plans presented by TPA include installation of curbing along the area that vehicles park on River Road, as well as regrading of the exit from the plaza onto River Road, which will increase the elevation to address the site line issues caused by parked vehicles.

In response to Commission members questions, Mr. Lyon noted that the median is 8 ft. wide with an 18 ft. travel lane and a 19 ft. depth for parking spaces. To allow for the median and angled parking, the Plaza will be widened by 14 feet, 7 feet on each of the Town Hall lawn and business sides. He stated that the sidewalks will have curbing that will be put in place. Mr. Lyon explained that the parking/sidewalk access will now all be ADA compliant. Mr. Frank expressed concern for public safety as now vehicles will be parking closer to the businesses and to the sidewalks. Mr. Lyon stated that the curbing installed should address this concern.

Mrs. Hill asked where the electric vehicle charging station would be located. Mr. Lyon stated this would be located in the plaza off Rt. 47 along the sidewalk that is adjacent to the new Judy Black park.

Mr. Lyon stated that the final Plaza Plans should be completed fall/early winter 2016 and construction is estimated to begin the summer of 2017. He explained that the

construction would be done in phases so that businesses will be accessible during this construction process. Again, Mr. Lyon noted the commendable work that TPA has done in this plaza improvement project, including their research into the history of the Town and obtaining public input. The Commission members agreed.

**Communications:**

N/A

**Administrative Business:**

Revision of the Subdivision Regulations:

Mr. Frank stated that Mrs. Hill had prepared a draft including changes proposed when the Commission had last actively considered the regulations. Mr. Hileman has them and will be working on reformatting the document in an electronic form so that further review and comment may proceed.

Mr. Frank suggested that members look at subdivision regulations from towns similar to Washington. He also

encouraged members to review the paper draft distributed by Mrs. Hill last September to consider whether all relevant subjects are covered.

**Adjournment:**

**MOTION**: To adjourn the meeting at 8:34 p.m. By Mr. Rimsky,

seconded by Mr. Hileman, passed 5-0.

**By:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Donna Pennell/Land Use Secretary

August 5, 2016