**TOWN OF WASHINGTON**

**Bryan Memorial Town Hall**

**Washington Depot, CT**

**PLANNING COMMISSION**

**MINUTES**

December 7, 2016

7:30 p.m. Main Level Meeting Room

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

**Alternates Present:** Ms. Ryland, Ms. Gager

**Alternates Absent:** Mr. Bedini

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

**Regular Meeting:**

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

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

 Mr. Carey

**Consideration of the Minutes:**

The Commission considered the minutes of the November 2, 2016, Planning Commission meeting.

Mr. Frank noted a correction needed on page 1. Members present listed Ms. Gager and this should be deleted as she was correctly listed as “Alternate Present”.

Also, Mr. Frank noted a correction to page 3 under Plaza Improvement Committee Report, last paragraph. The sentence reading, “There was further discussion, following which Mr. Frank stated that, while he believed that the appropriate forum for present discussion and resolution of this matter was the Plaza Improvement Committee.”, should read, “There was further discussion, following which Mr. Frank stated that while he believed this was a significant issue, the appropriate forum for present discussion and resolution of this matter was the Plaza Improvement Committee.”

**MOTION:** To accept the minutes from the November 2, 2016 Planning Commission meeting as amended. By Mr. Hileman, passed by 5-0 vote.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

**Plan of Conservation and Development:**

**Sustainability Subcommittee Report:**

Ms. Jahnke stated that the Subcommittee held a meeting on Monday, December 5, 2016. She stated that members each have areas of concern and it would be helpful if the Commission gave input. Ms. Jahnke noted that the issues at hand being discussed are the educational, housing and employment concerns. She requested some guidance from the Planning Commission with regard to these focused areas.

Members discussed their suggestions to help the Sustainability Subcommittee focus in on their objectives and have a clearer agenda.

**Economic Development Advisory Committee Report:**

The Commission had received a request from the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDC) for its support for a continued budget line item appropriation in the 2017-2018 fiscal year. The EDC had submitted a memorandum concerning its present and proposed activities and an estimated budget. There was discussion concerning special budget items. Some Commission members did question the budget in regard to where funding should be coming from and felt that some of the functions and expenses listed should come from existing departments within Town Hall. It was noted that special budget items and allocations were matters to be discussed by the EDC with the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance and that the request to the Planning Commission was to support the continuity of the work of the EDC in the manner performed during the two most recent fiscal years.

Mr. Hileman noted that although the 2014 Plan of Conservation and Development had recommended the hiring by the Town of an Economic Development Director, that did not appear to be under consideration.

Mr. Frank read aloud a statement from First Selectman Mark Lyon, Chairman of the EDC. This statement said that the EDC did discuss the recommendation, but determined that at this point in structuring the economic development program, it seemed premature to take on an employee in any capacity.

Mr. Lyon stated that the current relationship with the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC) is fulfilling its needs. CERC has expertise, a broad range of resources, and has developed a small town component which supports the EDC’s goals in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Mr. Rimsky stated that he would like to see the EDC proceed with their process and has no qualms with that or the work that has been done by the Committee. However, Mr. Rimsky stated that he does have a concern with the budget, as it has no strategic appearance in its allocation.

Ms. Ryland stated she agreed that the departments and commissions already in place should be responsible for their duties and funding them as such. Ms. Ryland and Mr. Rimsky believe that it is important that all involved should work collaboratively.

After full discussion, it was the consensus of the Commission to endorse the request of the EDC to the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance to provide line item funding in the 2017-2018 Town Budget for the continuation of the EDC’s initiative.

**Plaza Improvement Committee Report:**

Mr. Rimsky stated there has been no final plan that he has seen as yet.

Mr. Frank asked if the design presented is still basically the same. Mr. Rimsky stated yes and that nothing has changed. Mr. Frank inquired about public informational meeting in the future and a request to the Planning Commission for an 8-24 report, to which Mr. Rimsky replied that these will occur.

**Region #12 AgSTEM Proposal:**

Ms. Ryland had prepared and distributed a document concerning the Region #12 AgSTEM proposal. Mr. Frank prefaced her remarks, noting that the Planning Commission has limited authority in these matters, but that this is a subject of concern.

He further stated that the statute limits the authority of the Planning Commission to the preparation of the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), approval of municipal improvements and regulation of subdivisions. Mr. Frank stated that in the recent POCD, it was noted under Demographic and Housing that there is a future forecast of a decrease in the district’s public school enrollment, which may affect the planning for other types of services and facilities. The POCD urged collaboration with Region 12 to respond to the demographic trends and to create strategies for addressing the future needs of the district’s students.

Ms. Ryland stated that the route the Board of Education’s Plan is taking fail in their goal and does not address the needs of the student. She noted that only 20 students from the Town of Washington will be a part of this program and the remaining 85% will be out of district students. She feels the path the Board of Education is going down will have some serious ramifications for the community at large in terms of redefining the town’s educational process.

Mr. Hileman stated that AgSTEM is being brought in and placed alongside the current curriculum and which will remain in existence.

Ms. Ryland stated that Planning Commission should be concerned that the educational system will be going through a radical change and it will have an effect on economic development and sustainability of the Town.

Further discussion took place regarding the possibility of requesting another referendum and if it would be possible, as well as the legality of doing so.

Ms. Gager gave enrollment statistics. She stated that as of 2024, the estimated number of high school graduates in Connecticut is predicted to drop 26.9% below current levels. Ms. Gager also noted that if this is not a sustainable project and runs in deficit, it will cost tax payers more money. Ms. Gager stated if this occurs, the mill rate will increase and it will be more costly for people to move to this area, which would be a concern for the Town of Washington.

**Other Business:**

Mr. Frank reviewed the status of the Ingrassia six lot subdivision application, 292 Bee Brook Road. The matter was not included on the agenda for tonight’s meeting because there had been no appearance for the applicant at the Commission’s October or November meetings and there had been no response from the applicant’s attorney to Commission communications on October 3 and October 10 until late in the day yesterday, December 6, a period of two months. Since such submission did not allow time for review by the Commission at this meeting, copies were distributed at the meeting for discussion at the Commission’s next meeting, January 4, 2017.

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With regard to the Revision of the Subdivision Regulations, Mr. Hileman stated that he has some of the member’s comments recorded electronically on the document and he would like to forward it on to another Commission member for view/comments. Mr. Carey stated that he would like to review the document next and Mr. Hileman will forward the document to him.

**Communications:**

Mrs. Hill submitted a notification regarding bridge replacement at Mallory Brook on Route 109, which will be done by the State Department of Transportation (DOT). The DOT also submitted this notification to the Inland Wetlands and Zoning Commissions. She noted that the DOT will accept comments, but this is not required.

**Administrative Business:**

The Planning Commission 2017 meeting calendar was submitted for approval and distributed to Commission members.

**MOTION:** To approve the 2017 Planning Commission Calendar. By Mr. Rimsky, seconded by Mr. Hileman, passed 5-0 vote.

Before adjournment of meeting, Mr. Frank reminded the Commission that this would be the last Planning Commission meeting he will be conducting since his term ends this month. Commission members thanked Mr. Frank for his service and wished him well.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Motion:** To adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m. By Mr. Frank, seconded by Mr. Hileman, passed by 5-0 vote.

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

Donna Pennell/Land Use Secretary

 December 15, 2016