

TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the December 14, 2005 meeting

Meeting called to order by Christopher Geiss at 7:20 in the Town Manager's conference room. The meeting was attended by Commissioners Ingrid Boelhouwer, Gene Grayson, Robert Pulford, Ralph Moyer, Christopher Geiss, Royce Vehslage, Council Liaison, Matthew Forrest and Staff Liaison, Kathy Bagley.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[The November 9, 2005 minutes](#) were approved (Motion by I. Boelhouwer, seconded by G. Grayson).

II. COMMUNICATIONS

- Email from Kathy Bagley handed out referencing website resources for the analyses of land use change and build-out scenarios.
- Newsletter of the Conservation & Inland Wetlands Commissions, Inc. (which the own Manager receives) was circulated.

III. OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

Matthew Forrest:

Mr. Forrest reported on two issues the Town Council has expressed a desire in focusing on, which could be relevant to the Commission. Whichever issue(s) the Commission undertook to assist the Town Council with, it would require review, possibly research and then providing input to the Town Council. These issues are:

1. The Council has expressed an interest to make the preservation of open space in town a priority over the next two years. This would include the financing of purchasing open space or the development rights to such open space. The Town Council is seeking input as to what parcels of open space should be considered by them and a prioritization of those parcels.
2. The Council is interested in exploring the issue of energy conservation. More specifically, the option of purchasing energy from clean energy resources, with the possible involvement of an energy coop.

Discussion on these issues lead to general agreement that the first of these issues, preservation of open space, is more in line with the charge of the Commission. Further, it was acknowledged that the Commission has already generated the criteria necessary to apply to the issue of prioritizing specific parcels of open space which could/should be addressed by the Town Council.

Kathy Bagley:

Ms. Bagley indicated that a Mr. Bill Knapp has expressed an interest in becoming involved with the Commission. There was discussion as to whether Tracy Gionfriddo intends to remain on the Commission with the understanding that she does and will. All members note the benefit of having an individual express a desire to become involved with and work with the Commission, with the decision that Kathy Bagley will approach Mr. Knapp and let him know that the Commission would welcome him as a volunteer.

November 30 meeting on land trusts:

I. Boelhouwer reports on the meeting lead by Melissa Spear of The Trust for Public Land. The discussion at that meeting relayed various means of preserving land by towns, without the need of an outright purchase of the land of interest. Specifically, the right to develop land can be acquired and in some circumstances federal and/or state money can be made available. The examples used by Ms. Spear were the Eddy Farm in Newington and the Valley Farm in Woodstock. Also mentioned was the ability of towns to obtain bonding for such purchases, without incurring the cost of the bonding until the approved monies are utilized.

Open space update, GIS/GPS mapping project:

Mr. Geiss reported on the computerized mapping and indicated that the program will not require any special software for the user to open and utilize it, by way of a CD. Mr. Geiss demonstrated an example of what has been produced thus far in these efforts. Mr. Geiss also discussed his desire to scan in aerial photos which could be overlaid onto the maps as a means of illustrating the change in open space over time. This project could also be used for future public presentations.

Heritage Way update:

Dates are being discussed for a work meeting in order to be ready to go when the warm weather arrives.

Miscellaneous Commission business:

I. Boelhouwer was able to get map from the Town Manager for use by the Commission in working on the application of the Commissions criteria to specific parcels of open space. Due to the time needed to work through this issue a special meeting was set for January 3, 2006 at 7 pm.

G. Grayson moved to adjourn the meeting, which motion was seconded and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Royce Vehslage
Ad Hoc Secretary