**Conservation Subdivision Committee**

**May 23, 2017 Meeting Minutes**

The meeting began at 6:30 pm.

**1. Roll Call: Present:** Mike Schwindt, Sam York, Alan Blanchard, Paul Auclair, Peter Sherr, Tom Gruber, Meg Coon, Sally Stockwell, Carla Nixon - Town Planner, & Christina Silberman - Administrative Assistant.

**2. Adoption of Minutes from the April 25, 2017 meeting:** Mr. York moved to accept the minutes of the April 25, 2017 meeting, seconded by Mr. Auclair and **VOTED**, all in favor.

Mr. Schwindt noted that the second paragraph of the minutes references the election of a Chair and Vice Chair. Bob Waterhouse was the Chair and Mr. Schwindt was the Vice Chair. Mr. Waterhouse has passed away so Mr. Schwindt is now chairing the meeting. The Board can act to elect a new Chair and Vice Chair or Mr. Schwindt can continue as Vice Chair. Mr. York moved to elect Mike Schwindt as Chair, seconded by Mr. Auclair and **VOTED**, all in favor. Mr. Auclair suggested Mr. York be nominated as Vice Chair. Mr. York noted that he is Chair of the Conservation Commission and asked if someone else would like this. Mr. York nominated Alan Blanchard as Vice Chair. There were no other nominations. The Board **VOTED** all in favor of Mr. Blanchard for Vice Chair.

**3. Review of Draft Conservation Subdivision Ordinance:** Planning Board Liaison Peter Sherr said he has read the minutes of the last meeting that he missed and he gathers that there was strong support from the Board for a conservation subdivision. Mr. Sherr asked if the Committee discussed the replacement of the cluster subdivision with a conservation subdivision and keeping the traditional subdivision. Ms. Nixon said they did not discuss this at the last meeting and it is ahead of the Committee.

The Committee began review of the draft ordinance section by section beginning with the purpose of the Conservation Subdivision. Mr. Auclair said that item c doesn’t seem to fit with what was discussed at the last meeting by referring to a “zoning district” and asked if this will be a contract zone or an overlay. Ms. Nixon said it is not intended to be a contract zone or an overlay and suggested changing the term “zoning district” to “subdivision option”.

Mr. York said he would like to see a definition for natural resources and Chairman Schmidt said that this is a good point and the Committee can come back to this.

Mr. Blanchard referred to item m and questioned how net zero or energy efficient homes tie to land use and he does think it is a good thing. Ms. Nixon said it is a bit of a stretch to include but she was looking for ways to incentivize the development of a conservation style subdivision when a parcel of land might not have much in the way of primary or secondary conservation areas.

Ms. Nixon said that the gist of the presentation that was given at the meeting last month is that in order to make these types of subdivisions happen, there are two ways to do it. One way is to remove the other options and say this is how it has to be done, but Ms. Nixon did not think this approach would get very far with the Town Council. A way to make a conservation subdivision appealing to landowners and developers is that if the subdivision is developed in a certain way, the developer may get an additional 1 or 2 lots as a kind of density bonus. The Committee discussed the current subdivision options relative to the proposed conservation subdivision. Ms. Stockwell asked why the Committee feels that the Town Council won’t go for the conservation subdivision since it is in the Comprehensive Plan and the Town has indicated they want to move forward with a conservation subdivision plan. Mr. Sherr said the traditional subdivision will probably stay based on the survey that was done and retaining the RR districts. Mr. Sherr said the question is if the conservation replaces the cluster or if the town keeps the cluster and also offers conservation and traditional.

Ms. Nixon said that with the way the conservation subdivision is being developed, with the primary and secondary conservation areas, the view is that much of the good, developable land will be preserved for open space and the developer would be left with little land on which to site houses and the lots need to be very small. This could be too restrictive for a rural/suburban community like Cumberland. Ms. Nixon said that some scenarios were presented at the last meeting that did reduce the buildable area considerably. Ms. Stockwell noted that this would reduce the lot size but not the number of homes.

Mr. Auclair said that cluster subdivisions require 25% free space and a lot of space is netted out for slopes, wetlands, vernal pools, etc. and is not counted in the 25%. Mr. Auclair said we are talking about 40% gross area of free space for the conservation subdivision and he asked if that is much different than a cluster.

Mr. Sherr noted that the Committee is about to get into the details now and said that the Committee hasn’t defined what the minimum lot size is yet. Mr. Sherr said the conservation subdivision will force the good land, not just the undesirable land, to be set aside. Ms. Stockwell said that a conservation subdivision looks at the whole parcel for what is unbuildable and where the high value resources are such as wildlife habitat, aquifers, etc. to make sure these are identified and then fits in the building envelopes with the least impact on the high valued resources.

Mr. Sherr said the Committee is charged now to dive into the details and figure out what the percentage should be (for open space), the minimum lot size and if there should be a density bonus for certain things. Ms. Stockwell said she would also like to consider a maximum lot size and she referenced a *Grow Smart* newsletter that will be copied and shared with the Committee.

The Committee further reviewed the draft ordinance and discussed revisions.

**4. Next Steps:** The Committee will review the remainder of the draft ordinance to go over at the next meeting.

**5. Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm. The next meeting will be Tuesday, June 27, 2017 at 6:30 pm.