**Conservation Subdivision Advisory Committee**

**December 1, 2016 Meeting Minutes**

The meeting began at 6:30 pm.

**Present:** Mike Schwindt, Bob Waterhouse, Sam York, Peter Sherr - Planning Board Liaison, Carla Nixon - Town Planner, Christina Silberman - Admin. Asst. to Planning & Code Enforcement. Tom Gruber - Town Council Liaison, arrived after the meeting began. **Absent:** William Moulton.

Corrections to add the vote for Chairman and fix a typographical error in the October 8, 2016 meeting minutes were discussed. Ms. Silberman will make the corrections.

The Board discussed the status of the committee and if official votes are needed. Mr. Sherr suggested making sure there is a quorum present to vote on the committee’s final findings.

Ms. Nixon reported that David Carlson has resigned as a member of the committee and asked members to let her know of anyone that may be interested in filling the vacancy. Sally Stockwell, Chris Franklin and Jeff Porter were suggested. Ms. Nixon will follow up on the suggestions.

Mr. York nominated Mr. Schwindt as Vice Chairman, seconded by Mr. Waterhouse and **VOTED, 2 yeas, 1 abstained (Schwindt)**.

Ms. Nixon reviewed the information provided on the number of subdivision vs. non-subdivision building permits since 2011 as well as the number of growth permits issued since 2010. The Committee discussed the information. Ms. Nixon said that the Town Council can vote to amend the ordinance and increase the number of growth permits available.

Mr. Sherr said that the Land Use Committee found that residents are interested in controlling growth and the town has to have flexibility also.

Mr. York asked how apartments and multiplexes are counted for growth permits. Ms. Nixon said they are counted by dwelling unit.

Ms. Nixon said that it is hard to determine if a conservation subdivision option would benefit the Town

Mr. Waterhouse said that replacing a cluster subdivision with a conservation subdivision will allow more open space of good land and allows for smaller house lots. Mr. Waterhouse is not sure if the goal will be accomplished if both types of subdivisions are available.

Mr. Sherr said that in his opinion, a developer would choose a cluster subdivision over a conservation subdivision 99% of the time if aconservation subdivision is not mandated unless there are incentives. Having a consultant prepare some scenarios would help to see the pros and cons of conservation vs. cluster subdivisions. Ms. Nixon said she will check on funding for a consultant.

Ms. Nixon said we need a map showing all of the open space and trails and the lots that are preserved.

Mr. Sherr noted that even if the Town does away with cluster subdivisions, a contract zone could be an option. Mr. Waterhouse asked about the “public good” requirement for a contract zone. Ms. Nixon said the requirement for a “public benefit” was removed from the ordinance for a contract zone because it is an ambiguous term.

Mr. Gruber arrived.

Mr. York suggested checking with neighboring towns to see if they have a conservation subdivision and how they work.

Mr. Gruber said that exceptions can be made and there can be exemptions for growth permits.

Ms. Nixon said the Committee needs to determine which parcels are significant. The Committee should consider if a conservation subdivision would be for all zones or only certain ones and if there should be a density bonus. If the Town adopts a conservation subdivision, it could be challenging to work with.

Mr. Sherr said it would be good to have someone explain the conservation subdivision with visuals and concrete scenarios and to see what conservation vs. cluster would look like.

Mr. Waterhouse said he would worry about smaller lots appealing to people. Mr. York said there would be more open space surrounding the lots. Mr. Waterhouse said some people want a large lot and do not wish to be in a neighborhood.

Mr. Sherr said towns are preserving more land now too. A cluster subdivision does not protect any of the good land. With a conservation subdivision, the town can force the developer to preserve some of the nice land. Mr. Sherr noted that if the conservation subdivision is too restrictive, it would force developers out of town and they would go to other towns. The key is managed growth.

Ms. Nixon listed things to do in preparation for the next meeting;

1. Provide a map with all parcels greater than 5 acres showing all conservation land, trails and wildlife corridors.
2. Look into securing a consultant.
3. Check with neighboring towns with a conservation subdivision to see what they do.
4. Provide an example of a real piece of land and what it could look like with conservation vs. cluster subdivision.

The next meeting will be on January 5, 2017 at 6:30 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.