

**PLANNING BOARD WORKSHOP MINUTES  
JOINT MEETING WITH THE TRAILS COMMITTEE  
August 22, 2007**

**ROLL CALL:**

Ruth-Ellen Post, Chairman – Present	Ross McLeod, Vice Chairman – Present
Nancy Prendergast, Secretary – Excused	Walter Kolodziej, Regular Member – Present
Phil LoChiatto, Regular Member – Present	Pam Skinner, Regular Member – Present
Neelima Gogumalla, Alternate – Excused	Rick Okerman, Alternate – Present
Alan Carpenter, Selectmen Member – Present	Margaret Crisler, Selectmen Alternate – Excused

**TRAILS COMMITTEE and/or CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

Wayne Morris, Dianna Fallon, John Mangan, Jim Finn, Mark Samsel, Chris Rossetti

**STAFF:**

Al Turner, Director of Planning and Development – Excused  
Shaun Logue, Town Planner – Present

- *Ms. Post opened the meeting at 7:20 pm.*
- *Mr. Okerman replaced Ms. Prendergast.*
- *The Board stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.*

**OLD/NEW BUSINESS:**

- Mr. LoChiatto and Mr. Kolodziej will be the Planning Board representatives on the CIP Committee;
- Board discussion regarding the Town of Windham being ahead of the curve regarding banning electronic signs.

**PUBLIC MATTERS:**

**Joint Meeting with the Trails Committee Regarding Pedestrian Easements**

Ms. Post read and distributed an agenda for the meeting and asked that comments not be repeated that were in the correspondence received. Confidential legal communication regarding pedestrian trails has been received from Attorney Campbell. Ms. Post reviewed the following correspondence or email from: 1) Wayne Morris; 2) Mike Piessens; 3) Allan and Chris Putnam; and 4) Greg Burton.

Mr. Morris showed the easements on a map. He then gave a history of the pedestrian easements and distributed copies of a map. He thanked Mr. Zohdi of Herbert Associates for their help with the map. Mr. Morris discussed the locations of the easements, conservation lands, and Town-owned land. The Trails Committee met in July, some residents attended the meeting, and certified letters were sent out regarding the easements.

Board discussion with Mr. Morris ensued regarding the catalog of trails approved by the Planning Board, is there another level of people that need to be notified? there are no plans to clear anything on private property, the Walking in Windham booklet shows where the private properties are, what are the plans once the surveys are completed? identify the easements in the field and make a map, marking the centerline of the trail, it is a volunteer effort, owners can place “no trespassing” signs, the type of trail improvements are needed are different on each trail, a typical width of an easement is 10’, generally the trail it is a footpath, not using excavators to make the trails, not paving the trails, the approved trails are under the purview of the Selectmen, to dispose of a trail would have to go on the Town Warrant, and Selectmen asked the Trails Committee to make an inventory of the trails.

Chris Rosetti, Conservation Commission, asked about the use of the trails. Mr. Morris stated that the plans all say "pedestrian" easements.

Public comments from Allan Putnam, 26 Bear Hill Road, stated that an easement cuts through the back of his property and some of his neighbors' properties, his neighbors did not received a letter, and there is a lot of information in the letter that should be read by the Board before any decisions are made. He highlighted his issues with the easements including it creates privacy issues, the land will have to be filled, it is a patchwork of easements, what purpose do they hold now that the neighborhoods are developed, site walks should be conducted, there are not enough volunteers to maintain the easements, the easement is 10 years old, and there will be unauthorized use.

Greg Burton, 26 Simpson Road, asked who has the voting authority to delete the easements. The Board response is that it depends on where the plan is in the approval process. Once it is approved and recorded it has to go to the Town Warrant for a vote. His neighbors are against making the easement into a trail, his letter details the reasons, there are safety issues, concerned with the non-hikers, there are liability impacts, proper surveying was not done, the easement goes over his neighbors well and a drainage easement and is impassable, water quality will be an issue, and snowmobiles will use the trail.

Mike Piessens, 19 Squire Armour Road, stated that his letter outlines his issues, the original easements were approved 1999, Griffin Park was just a field then with little traffic, the traffic volume has increased multifold, the original intent made sense but has changed, it would become an alternate access to Griffin Park, it would increase traffic, parking, garbage, criminal mischief, litter, and vandalism to their neighborhood, will the trail be maintained on a continual basis so that people will not leave the trail and go onto private property, snowmobiles and hunters will use the trail, and concerned with the ramifications to the neighborhood.

Eric Leuteritz, 21 Simpson Road, stated that it is a frustrating process, just moved here 3 months ago, the easement is not on his property, the trail goes over a drainage easement, his neighbor's driveway will be used, hikers won't use a 1000' path, the trail does not make sense, and what are the options? The Board discussed how the trails come about during the planning process. Mr. Leuteritz asked if this meeting should be with the Selectmen.

Board discussion that the Planning Board has the authority if the easements have not been recorded and the Selectmen will ask for the Planning Board's input, which easements make sense and which do not, and should the confidential letter be made public. Mr. McLeod motioned to release the confidential legal communication to the public dated August 18, 2007 written by Bernard H. Campbell regarding pedestrian trails. Mr. Kolodziej seconded. Passed 7-0. Discussion with Mr. Morris continued regarding easements to nowhere, and are there some easements without value. Mr. Morris stated that all the easements make sense. Board discussion about the Bear Hill trail to get to the Gage Lands, the old woods roads aren't necessarily where the easement is, it would be time consuming to locate homes and wells on the map, there should not be wells drilled on Town property, the easements help with livable-walkable communities, and maybe the developers should rough-in the trails in the beginning.

Louise Fitzgerald, 24 Bear Hill Road, stated that nobody wants strangers walking on their property, people have walked the trail, and it's not safe for their children.

Lisa Piessens, 19 Squire Armour Road, stated her concerns are with the trouble with Griffin Park, it has been trouble since the skateboard park has been installed, the dog problem is not solved, the "skate-rats" are trouble, the skateboarders use the hill on Squire Armour Road, she showed photos of damage done

to her property by vandals and litter left behind, and she is fed up.

David Goss, 16 Squire Armour Road, stated that all the information should be on one map to see if a trail would be a good idea, his neighbor has valid concerns, it could be an ambush site for small children, and the Committee should reconsider the trail. Board discussion that the only way to change it is through a Warrant Article. Mr. Goss asked about the cost of putting in the trail. The trails are being put in by volunteers without large equipment.

Mr. Burton referred to page 13 of the Walking in Windham book, the attempt is to connect the two neighborhoods, and the neighbors do not want it.

Mr. Morris stated that a Candlewood trail abutter likes the trail and has not had any problems.

The public portion of the meeting was closed. The Board discussed the inventorying of the trails, the letter from the Trails Committee was not required but was a courtesy, and the topic will be discussed at a Selectmen's meeting. Mr. Morris stated they will not do anything until after the March meeting in case of Warrant Articles. Board discussion that when the trail is put on paper there are no abutters, thanked the abutters for their patience, like Mr. Morris' suggestion that the trails get put in during the development stage, what is the time frame to complete the map, the information will be needed for Warrant Articles, the subdivision plan has the easements, and surveys will resume after the March election.

Mr. Carpenter motioned to adjourn. Mr. McLeod seconded. Passed 7-0. Meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

These minutes are in draft form and have not yet been reviewed and approved.  
Respectfully submitted, Nancy Charland