

Minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting of the
West Fairlee ("WF") Planning Commission ("PC")
July 11, 2016
Community Building, Rte 113

Members Present : John Benjamin, Chair, Al Pfeiffer, Vice Chair, Tom Baccei, Peggy Burden, Samantha Petrone and Christine Aquino, Clerk.

Others Present : Chris Sargent, Senior Planner, Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission ("TRORC") and Bryan Stone

Welcome

John called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Public Comment

John referred to an email he received from resident James Hughes with the following suggestions:

"Next to the preservation/renewed use of Bean Hall, my planning ideas for the town are as follows.

1. Get some kind of option for the town to acquire the Barrett properties
2. Convert the Barrett house into a summer use town property with rental paddle craft run by town
3. Create additional parking on the north side of Rte 244 where the Barrett's abandoned boats and Volvo reside.
4. Remove trash from adjacent pond, build a circumferential wooden walkway around the pond to create a nature-study area.
5. Connect the nature study pond to the Cross-Rivendell trail via a connector running through woods to the east of the Camp Horizon property.

This would improve WF town access to Lake Fairlee, create an educational asset, and create a "destination" in the Town for tourists."

John said he replied requesting Mr. Hughes provide more specific information. He noted to Mr. Hughes that the PC does not have the authority to acquire title to property or an option to purchase property and that such authority rests with the Selectboard, and ultimately the voters.

Minutes

Upon motion made and duly seconded, it was VOTED to approve the minutes of the June 13, 2016 meeting.

Report on Municipal Planning Grant ("MPG"), Application Process and Actions to be taken by Planning Commission and Selectboard

There was general discussion about timing for developing a new or updated town plan and some possible ways to proceed. Readoption of the 2012 Town Plan, and alternatively, readoption of the 2012 Town Plan with the addition of an updated Flood Resiliency chapter were discussed as ways to ensure that if a 2017 Town Plan is not adopted by the August 27, 2017 expiration of the 2012 Town Plan, the Town would

continue be covered by a town plan. This would be especially important for grant eligibility and/or if an Act 250 application should be filed. The best ways to get community input and support during the process of updating WF's Town Plan were discussed.

Chris Sargent reviewed two draft budgets for the Municipal Planning Grant ("MPG") application. He said that TRORC estimates that if the PC plans to engage TRORC to assist in updating the Town Plan and mailing a survey to property owners, WF would need to apply for an estimated \$15,000 MPG, which would require about \$2,300 in matching funds by WF. If TRORC's engagement does not include a survey, WF would need to apply for up to \$10,000 with WF matching about \$1,000. The pros and cons of both were discussed. Mr. Sargent suggested that the comprehensive survey done in preparation for the existing Town Plan may be sufficient to update the Town Plan. In anticipation that the MPG application window may open before the next PC monthly meeting, it was agreed that the PC should authorize John Benjamin to move forward with an application. Upon motion made and duly seconded, it was VOTED to authorize John Benjamin to sign the resolution to apply for an MPG.

Mr. Sargent gave a brief overview of the recently enacted Act 174 that would allow towns and municipalities to have a higher level of consideration prior to the Public Service Board's approval of large scale energy projects such as wind towers and solar arrays. He said the final rules have not been published yet. Mr. Sargent then left the meeting.

There was a discussion about the feasibility of the PC conducting a survey without assistance from TRORC. The PC members also discussed the possibility of hosting one or more community meetings to gather input from the community.

There was also some discussion about what in the plan can be expected to be accomplished and who should be responsible – the PC, the Selectboard, and especially community stakeholders. There was a consensus that desires expressed in the last community survey could not be successfully addressed by a handful of part-time PC and Selectboard members. Rather, the Selectboard and PC should help enable and empower community stakeholders to form ad hoc committees to successfully undertake desired projects.

Action Steps

John will clarify with Chris Sargent some language and timing issues.

John will update the timeline and email to the members.

Al will present Bryan Stone's name to the Selectboard for appointment to the PC.

Follow-up Items

-Review of the Bylaws was tabled until Nancy's return.

-Traffic on Middlebrook was reported to the Sheriff's office. No change noticed.

-Alternative meeting location was confirmed. It was agreed to hold the August 8th meeting at the West Fairlee Center Community Club building on Middlebrook Road.

-Review of the 2012 Town Plan for continued applicability of community information. PC members are reminded to complete their review of the 2012 Town Plan prior to the next meeting.

It was suggested by John and generously agreed by members that the task of recording meeting minutes be shared by members on a monthly rotation, since the scribe cannot easily take part in the discussions. The responsibility for minutes follows: August – Al, September – Tom, October – Samantha, November – Peggy. Chris Aquino will retain the elected position as Clerk of the PC.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Aquino, Clerk