

## **DRAFT**

Minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting  
of the West Fairlee Planning Commission (PC)

August 8, 2016, 7:00 P.M.

Location: West Fairlee Community Club Building, Middlebrook Road

### **Members Present**

John Benjamin, Chair, Al Pfeiffer, Vice Chair, Tom Baccei, Peggy Burden, Chris Aquino, Bryan Stone

### **1. Welcome**

John called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M. after a brief delay caused by a power outage requiring the setup of a table and chairs outside.

John welcomed Bryan Stone to his first meeting following the Selectboard confirmation of his nomination at its July 18, 2016 regular meeting.

John distributed an updated PC roster and Peggy Burden indicated a change to her email address. An updated Schedule of Work was distributed.

**2. Public Comments** There were no members of the public in attendance.

### **3. Approve Minutes of the July 11, 2016 Regular Meeting**

Peggy Burden moved and Tom Baccei seconded that the minutes of the last regular meeting be approved. The vote carried and the minutes were approved.

### **4. Receipt of Thetford's Proposed 2016 Town Plan**

John indicated that he received the Proposed 2016 Town Plan from Thetford. As required by State regulation, all town plans must be sent to abutting towns when they are being renewed or amended. Thetford has a Warned Public Hearing on August 16, 2016 at 7:00 P.M. John indicated that the document is available on the Thetford Town Website and might serve as a good model for the re-write of the West Fairlee Town Plan. The Thetford Town Plan shows a change from "village residential" to "rural residential" for a parcel of land adjacent to West Fairlee along the West Fairlee Road. The purpose of the recommended change is to bring the area in conformity with West Fairlee's land designation for its abutting area.

### **5. Discuss "Reapproval" of the 2012 West Fairlee Town Plan**

Planning Commission members agreed that it is unlikely, especially due to the delay in the release of the Municipal Planning Grant (MPG) applications, that the West Fairlee 2012-2017 Town Plan can be re-written and approved before it expires on August 27, 2017. Reapproval of the 2012-2017 Town Plan will ensure that the Town is covered for grant eligibility and in the event of an Act 250 application after August 27, 2017.

### **6. Update of the Town Plan Approval Mechanism**

Al Pfeiffer reviewed his discussion regarding the town plan approval process with Kevin Geiger, Senior Planner at TRORC (Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission). Kevin indicated that it would be unlikely that the PC and Selectboard (SB) would be able to complete all the required steps and public hearings before bringing the Town Plan before the voters on Election Day, November 8, 2016. West Fairlee bylaws require that the voters approve the Town Plan by Australian Ballot.

The PC would have to send via certified mail: a copy of the proposed Town Plan, a hearing notice, a report documenting changes to the plan, as well a solicitation for comments. This package must be sent to all abutting town planning commission chairs, the TRORC Chair, and the Department of Economic, Housing and Community Development. This must be done 30 days before a PC public hearing. In addition the PC must post the appropriate warning of its public hearing 15 days before the hearing.

After the PC's public hearing, any comments and suggestions that are deemed pertinent and appropriate by the PC must be incorporated and the revisions sent to the (SB). The SB then must hold a public hearing no sooner than 30 days. The SB must post warnings of its public hearing in the appropriate places within 15 days of the public hearing. Following its public hearing, the SB would send comments and suggestions to the PC. The PC would then consider whether to incorporate them into the proposed Town Plan.

The Town Clerk must receive a completed Town Plan and required documents to Warn the voters of the Australian Ballot at least 30 days before the election.

Following Al's report, it was the consensus of PC members that there was not enough time to pursue the November 8, 2016 General Election to vote by Australian Ballot on the Reapproval of the 2012-2017 Town Plan. It was agreed that the PC should pursue Reapproval during the 2017 Town Meeting instead. PC members also agreed that the recently completed "Flood Resiliency Chapter", which has been reviewed and accepted by TRORC, should be included if possible during the process of readopting of the 2012-2017 Town Plan.

Al will create a timeline with the necessary steps to meet get the Town Plan approved by Australian Ballot on Tuesday March 7, 2017.

#### **7. Update on Municipal Planning Grant**

Because of State delays in the funding process, the applications to apply for MPGs will most likely not be released until November 2016. The PC must complete the application and the SB must approve it before the Town can apply for funding. The funds will be used to engage TRORC to assist the PC with writing a "new" Town Plan for approval in 2017 or 2018. Importantly, MPG funds cannot be used for reapproval of a town plan, and TRORC cannot assist with writing a new town plan until the SB signs an agreement to engage TRORC for an agreed upon fee. John projected that if an MPG is awarded, the TRORC agreement would be executed by the SB in January or February 2017.

#### **8. Update of Review of the Planning Commission Bylaws**

Nancy Malmquist was not present, so discussion of the PC Bylaws will be held at the next PC Regular Meeting on September 12, 2016.

#### **9. Review of the 2012 Town Plan for Continued Applicability of Local Community Information**

John reiterated that PC members should read through the entire Town Plan and mark areas that need to be changed, note things that are missing, indicate possible emerging town issues, mark areas that are no longer issues or relevant. Members should also try to choose one or more sections that they have interest in guiding through the process of updating.

John also encouraged everyone to look at the newly proposed Thetford Town Plan as a possible model.

Respectfully submitted,

Al Pfeiffer,

Acting Secretary