

Minutes of the  
January 9, 2017 Regular Meeting of the  
West Fairlee Planning Commission (“PC”)

Members Present: John Benjamin, Chair, Al Pfeiffer, Vice Chair, Tom Baccei, Peggy Burden, Samantha Petrone and Chris Aquino, Clerk; Bryan Stone and Nancy Malmquist (each by speaker phone)

Welcome

John called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. noting that the Planning Commission members present in person and telephonically constitute a quorum. He said that due to time constraints of some members, Agenda items 3, 7 and 8 would be moved to the beginning of the meeting.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Minutes *(Distributed in advance)*

Upon motion made and duly seconded, it was VOTED to approve the Minutes for the December 12<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting.

Rules of Procedure and Bylaws *(Distributed in advance)*

There were no further comments or suggestions regarding the proposed Rules of Procedure and Bylaws. Upon motion made and duly seconded, it was VOTED to approve the RULES OF PROCEDURE AND BYLAWS, WEST FAIRLEE PLANNING COMMISSION. John reminded that these must replace the Bylaws that now appear on the Town website.

Planning Commission Annual Report for 2016 *(Distributed in advance)*

John asked if there were any comments or suggestions regarding the PC Annual Report. There were none. He said that in a motion to approve the PC Town Report, he would like the authority to edit the Report to a condensed version if the Select Board requests that it be reduced in length. Upon motion made and duly seconded, it was VOTED to approve the Planning Commission Annual Report for 2016 as written and authorize the Chair to condense the Report if requested by the Select Board without necessity of seeking reapproval of the Planning Commission.

Bryan Stone and Nancy Malmquist, respectively, terminated their telephone connections to the meeting.

Report on January 2, 2017 Select Board Public Hearing

John reported that no members of the public attended the hearing, except for himself, and that the Select Board had received no written or oral comments regarding the Draft West Fairlee 2017 Town Plan in advance of the public hearing.

Report on January 2, 2017 Select Board Meeting

John reported that, upon closing the Select Board Public Hearing on the Draft West Fairlee 2017 Town Plan, the Select Board voted to accept the Plan as written and schedule it to be voted by Australian ballot on March 7, 2017. He said that the Select Board also agreed to include a separate ballot question putting forth the PC’s recommendation to empower the Select Board to approve future town plans and amendments, as recommended by Two Rivers-Ottawquechee Regional Commission (TRORC).

Municipal Planning Grant (MPG)

John reported that he had received the awaited details regarding the MPG award. He said to correct his report at the December 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, the budget for writing a new town plan was estimated to be

\$ 9,830 and the MPG award is \$ 9,220. He said that there should be sufficient funds in the PC general ledger account to cover the required Town match: \$ 610 plus any costs that are unforeseen at this time. He said that the Select Board Chair has completed the on-line acceptance of the MPG.

#### Next Steps in the Town Plan Approval Process

There was a discussion among members regarding effective ways to communicate with voters about the importance of approving the Draft West Fairlee 2017 Town Plan. Talking Points were distributed to assist members in talking with voters.

#### Approval Mechanism for Future Town Plans and Amendments

There was a discussion among members regarding effective ways to communicate with voters about the importance of approving the PC's recommendation to have future town plans and amendments approved by the Select Board. A copy of the rationale for recommending this change was distributed to assist members in talking with voters.

#### Meeting Schedule

A DRAFT 2017-2018 Meeting Schedule was distributed for review and discussion.

#### Christine Aquino Resignation

Chris explained that due to schedule conflicts arising from a new employment opportunity outside of the area, she would be unable to continue serving on the PC. The Chair and members expressed gratitude for her service and her resignation was accepted with regret. She was encouraged to return in the future if her situation should change.

#### TRORC Letter Re: Village Settlement Boundary

John reported on a letter from TRORC that indicated TRORC is in the process of reviewing Village Settlement Boundaries of its member towns. TRORC indicated that based on its review it is not recommending any changes, but it wanted to allow the PC and Select Board to weigh in. John offered to provide a copy of the letter and map to any member that wanted to review it.

#### Corinth Subdivision Bylaws

The PC received a letter from the Corinth PC outlining proposed changes in its Subdivision Bylaws and advising of its public hearing on the matter. The purpose of the revision is to define Major and Minor subdivisions and their criteria for the Town of Corinth. There did not appear to be anything that would affect West Fairlee. John offered to make the proposed changes available to any interested member.

#### Silvio Conte National Wildlife Refuge Proposal

The final report following the close of the comment period is due mid-January. The concept is to enhance and enlarge a fish and wildlife corridor throughout the Connecticut River area (among other areas) throughout New England. Owners of land in target areas would be approached to sell to the Refuge on a voluntary basis. West Fairlee is considered to be of prime interest because there is a relative abundance of undeveloped land. A principal concern raised in the comment period is how towns would be compensated for land removed from their tax rolls. Hopefully the forthcoming report will clarify this and answer other important questions.

#### Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Acting Secretary