

Minutes of the
February 13, 2017 Regular Meeting of the
West Fairlee Planning Commission (“PC”)

Members Present: John Benjamin, Chair, Al Pfeiffer, Vice Chair, Tom Baccei, Peggy Burden, Bryan Stone and Nancy Malmquist

Others Present: Chris Sargent and Kevin Geiger, Senior Planners, Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (TRORC). Linda Baccei also joined the meeting at 8:05 P.M.

Welcome

John called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M. and he introduced Chris Sargent and Kevin Geiger to members. Chris announced that he will be leaving TRORC to take a position with another entity and that Kevin Geiger would be the PC’s liaison with TRORC.

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 January 9th Regular Meeting.

Municipal Planning Grant (MPG)

John asked Chris for an update on the MPG. Chris said that he believed that all was in order with the MPG itself and the agreement between TRORC and the Town for consultation and advisory services in connection with drafting a 2018 Town Plan. He said that he would verify that the Select Board Chair had completed the final acceptance steps.

Kickoff for 2018 Town Plan Project

Chris distributed an outline entitled “West Fairlee Town Plan 2017 MPG – Attachment A”. It described the process including: a review of the existing Town Plan by TRORC, public input forums, drafting individual chapters, updating town plan maps and final editing. Important deadlines were reviewed: Mid-Project Report due by August 31, 2017 and Project Completion and MPG funds spent by May 31, 2018. Kevin commented that Project Completion refers to TRORC’s consultation and drafting portion, not necessarily final approval of the 2018 Town Plan by the Select Board or voters, whichever approval mechanism is in effect.

Kevin stated that his first task will be to review the existing Town Plan and report back to the PC at its next meeting about necessary as well as suggested changes. He cautioned that under a recent directive from the State, TRORC will be required to periodically monitor the 2018 Town Plan for stated action items – whether or not progress is being made and action items are being completed according to the timetable detailed in the Town Plan. He said that he expects that TRORC reviews would be undertaken at approximately two years, four years and eight years after a town plan is approved.

Chris distributed the “TRORC Enhanced Consultation: Town of West Fairlee – 2012” report. He advised PC members that it would be good to review this report before beginning to draft the 2018 Town Plan.

John indicated a desire to shorten the length of the 2018 Town Plan through the use of links that readers could follow to obtain more detailed information about a topic. He used the detailed history of West Fairlee as an example. Kevin said that would be acceptable but that links would not be acceptable for

certain information. He said that he would guide the PC in the use of links as the PC completes each chapter.

Tom expressed a desire to have an executive summary to aid readers in finding the sections and information of interest to them. Tom also discussed his concern that the 2018 Town Plan not end up being a document sitting on a shelf gathering dust because it is not in continuous use and under periodic review by the PC and Select Board.

There was an exchange of ideas among PC members concerning the function, purpose, ownership and beneficiaries of a town plan. John described the format of successful past PC public forums held to hear public concerns and to obtain public input as preparation for drafting the 2012-2017 Town Plan. He also described the then current PC members' evaluation of the 2005 Town Plan before drafting the 2012-2017 Town Plan.

Linda Baccei joined the meeting at 8:05 P.M. after attending a meeting of the West Fairlee Volunteer Fire Department (FD). She described feedback she received after urging FD members to vote for the 2017 Town Plan and to authorize the Select Board to approve future town plans and amendments. PC members thanked her for her efforts.

At 8:10 Chris and Kevin left the meeting

Preparations for Town Meeting, March 4th, and Australian ballot voting, March 7th

John redistributed talking points for PC members to use when encouraging voters to vote "For" both ballot items. He asked members to step-up efforts once voters have received the Town Report in the mail. He talked about other possible initiatives including distribution of handouts at Recycling, at Town Meeting and as people enter the Community to vote on March 7th. He also discussed placing one or more articles on West Fairlee's daily Listserve email in advance of Town Meeting day. John made a final appeal for members to encourage neighbors and friends to vote.

Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

John Benjamin
Chair and Acting Clerk