

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

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

Others Present: Kevin Geiger, Senior Planner and Chris Damiani, Planner, Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (TRORC).

Welcome

John called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M. He welcomed Kevin Geiger and introduced Chris Damiani to members.

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 February 13th Regular Meeting.

2018 Town Plan Project

Kevin discussed his approach to drafting the West Fairlee 2018 Town Plan (“2018 Town Plan”). He said that the West Fairlee 2017 Town Plan, approved on March 7th would be a starting point. He showed the Index of the 2017 Town Plan with various sections highlighted in different colors to identify sections that he hopes to update and obtain PC consensus at PC meetings over the next year or so. He noted that TRORC’s consulting agreement on the Town Plan will end on May 31, 2018. He clarified that the 2018 Town Plan does not have to be approved by May 31, 2018.

There was a discussion about setting a deadline to complete the 2018 Town Plan. John, who had experience with the previous two town plans, said that could be difficult because there must be consensus among PC members on the wording of each section under review before the PC can move to another section. Kevin agreed, reminding members of the legal notice requirements for public hearings and the time potentially needed to make amendments pursuant to public input at forums and hearings. He suggested that the PC plan to prepare for a Select Board Hearing in April or May of 2018.

John reiterated his desire to shorten the length of the document, noting that the existing Town Plan is 98 pages in length. He expressed doubts that voters have the inclination to read such a lengthy document. He suggested to Kevin that “links” could be provided to direct readers to more detailed information on topics of interest. Tom agreed and suggested that something like an executive overview be developed that would help guide readers to particular section(s) for which they have an interest.

There was a discussion among members about various chapters that need updating and/or would be desirable to shorten. The discussion then turned to the concerns voters may raise such as the lack of cell phone service and lack of quality high speed internet in all areas of West Fairlee.

In response to a question from John, Kevin confirmed that, beginning with the 2018 Town Plan, TRORC will be required to perform periodic audits to ensure that what is stated in the 2018 Town Plan is being accomplished in the projected timeframes. Given the difficulty of attracting townspeople to run for offices or volunteer to serve on town committees, John urged caution when proposing projects and action steps.

John asked for confirmation that TRORC would assist the PC in conducting one or more public forums to gather public input. Kevin agreed. John then asked about a voter survey. Kevin stated that a survey is not part of TRORC's consulting agreement. Al expressed a desire for the PC to consider performing a survey on its own. Tom offered to assist. John said he would try to locate a copy of the 2010 survey and provide it to Al and Tom.

John recommended that members attend "A Land Use Primer" that will be presented by TRORC in West Fairlee's Community Room on Tuesday, March 28th at 6:30 P.M. He noted that town officials from surrounding communities have also been invited to attend. He also reminded members that the PC Annual Organization Meeting will be held on April 10th prior to the Regular PC Meeting.

Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted,

John Benjamin
Chair and Acting Clerk