

**Thetford Planning Commission
Minutes – October 2, 2007**

Present: Liora Alschuler, Stuart Blood, Hayden Brownell (arrived at 7:23), Heather Carlos, Lori Howard, Rick Howard, Kevin O’Hara, Wayne Parks (Chair)

Absent: Dennis Donahue

Guests: Linda Matteson, Chris Sargent, Cy Severance

1. 7:17: Meeting Called to Order.
2. 7:17: Public Comment: None.
3. 7:18: Review of Prior Minutes: Chair considered the minutes of September 18, 2007 adopted as corrected.
4. 7:20: Flood Ordinance: Continuing the discussion from the last Planning Commission meeting, 9/18/07, Blood again explained that currently, Thetford is in non-compliance of their Flood Ordinance and has received a notice of deficiency from the State. The continuing discussion is on whether to go beyond the minimum standards, by including the Town Plan recommendation to prohibit development in the flood plain outright in the flood ordinance. As decided in the last meeting, Blood invited Cy Severance and Linda Matteson, Thetford Representatives to the Connecticut River Joint Commission Upper Valley Subcommittee; and distributed the CRJC document, “Floodplain development”.

Cy Severance highlighted the reasons for prohibiting development in the Flood Plain as follows: preservation of prime agricultural land, economic advantage of attraction to tourists, wildlife corridor preservation, water quality, natural flood storage areas. Linda Matteson agreed with the points made by Severance. O’Hara asked why no more than three towns have prohibited development in flood plains. Severance explained that New Hampshire has a shoreline protection act, though Vermont does not, but there is some movement in Vermont in that direction. Chris Sargent commented that towns are generally resistant to telling people, particularly farmers, not to develop; and many towns and villages are already built in flood plains. He noted that agricultural uses and water based recreation are not subject to the restriction. Sargent stated that he does not recommend, but does endorse prohibiting development.

Planning Commission members who were absent at the last meeting stated their positions as follows: Alschuler stated that the argument to prohibit is compelling, but it is a difficult position to take; and she would first want to hear from the public. Rick Howard stated that he is in favor of updating the flood plain regulations to be compliant, but that is as far as he would go at this juncture. Lori Howard agreed with Rick Howard. The consensus of the group was that the document will either prohibit building, or allow building with a list of conditions. Parks asked the Planning Commission, for the next meeting, to think about how

to proceed; and to get proposed language of an ordinance with development prohibition, and model regulations.

5. 8:40: Zoning By-laws: Reviewed the proposed language in Chris Sargent's document "Town Plan Policy Discussion- 10/2/07" as follows:
 - RP#114: Punt to Sargent for re-write.
 - RP#10c: Already in Zoning.
 - RP#48, Section 3.13 (Formerly section 490) On-Site Water and Sewage Systems: Blood moved to approve as amended, removing the words "if applicable" at the end of the first sentence. Brownell seconded. Unanimous.
 - RP#106d: Re-write.
 - RP#115: Already in Zoning.
 - RP#116: No action.
 - O54, 088: No action.
 - RP#32,33: No action.
 - RP#91: No action.

Sargent will revise the document for the next meeting, and will include a list of Certificate of Occupancy requirements.

6. 9:20: Updates:
 - Selectboard: Mara Spata resigned from the Selectboard, effective October 29, 2007.
 - Two Rivers: Sargent reported that they are appealing the decision on Bradford Square to the Environmental court.
7. 9:23: Old Business: None.
8. 9:23: New Business: Blood reported that the Vermont Natural Resources Council is offering free technical assistance to communities in their grant project area, including Thetford; to help in the planning process to conserve forestland and rural resources. Alschuler offered to be the conduit.
9. 9:27: Adjournment.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Fenton
Recording Clerk
Thetford Planning Commission