

**Thetford Planning Commission  
Minutes – October 16, 2007**

**Present:** Liora Alschuler (arrived at 7:17), Stuart Blood, Hayden Brownell, Heather Carlos, Dennis Donahue (arrived at 7:18) Lori Howard (arrived at 7:25), Rick Howard (arrived at 7:25), Kevin O’Hara, Wayne Parks (Chair)

**Guests:** Mike Brown, Chris Sargent

1. 7:15: Meeting Called to Order.
2. 7:16: Public Comment: None.
3. 7:17: Review of Prior Minutes: Blood moved to adopt the minutes of October 2, 2007 as amended. Carlos seconded. Voting in favor were Alschuler, Blood, Brownell, Carlos, O’Hara, and Parks. Donahue abstained because he was not present at the meeting, and Lori and Rick Howard were not present for the vote. The motion passed.
4. 7:21: Flood Ordinance:

Blood reported on the October 15<sup>th</sup> conference that he attended at Vermont Law School, on river science and law. He highlighted the following three issues:

1. 75% of flood damage in Vermont is due to erosion, not inundation.
2. Most flood damage occurs outside the mapped flood zones.
3. Analysis of streams is useful to individuals who may not realize they need flood insurance, and to know which residents get called first in an incident.

The discussion continued from the last Planning Commission meeting, 10/2/07, of the Flood Ordinance; whether to go beyond the minimum standards, by including the Town Plan recommendation to prohibit development in the flood plain outright. Alschuler stated that having read and considered Blood’s memo of October 14, 2007, re: Flood regulations, the Commission should continue to discuss and consider their position; and try to decide at the next meeting, and craft an ordinance, with a list of reasons; then have a public session and hearing; then adjust the ordinance accordingly. Parks raised concern of taking a position, before having a hearing for input. Sargent responded that forums could take place at any time in the process, but there would still have to be hearings on the ordinance. Alschuler commented that she could go either way: forum first, or strait to hearings; and noted that most important is to lay out a position, get input, and be responsive. Brownell suggested formulation of a position before the public meeting, because an informal forum may not get people out. He said, for example, the Commission could state that they are considering a flood ordinance with strict conditional use, and are strongly inclined to prohibit building; and see what the response is.

Parks recommended having an expert speak at the meeting. O'Hara suggested possibly three experts; planner, river scientist, and legal; to speak briefly and answer questions. Carlos stated it is important to get information out to the public, both in handouts and the information session; including the information that the Commission has learned on the subject.

In discussion of how to proceed, Donahue commented that with the topic being, "Building in the flood plain", the question is: "Are you in favor of having building in the flood plain, or flood susceptible areas?" There was consensus to form a subcommittee to draft a list of reasons for the positions, for the next meeting. Volunteers were Alschuler, Blood, Brownell, and O'Hara. The Commission is considering having their December 4<sup>th</sup> meeting be an informational meeting, with a special meeting scheduled for later in that week.

5. 8:45: Zoning By-laws: Reviewed Chris Sargent's document "Town Plan Policy Discussion-10/16/07" as follows:
  - RP#110, 111: Sargent will write draft language, and get examples.
6. 9:10: Updates:
  - Selectboard: Brown reported:
    1. The Selectboard is looking to fill Mara Spata's vacancy.
    2. In November, the Selectboard will be starting the budget process.
  - Two Rivers: No updates.
7. 9:15: Old Business: None.
8. 9:15: New Business:
  1. Alschuler reported that she purchased a projector, which she will bring in for presentations.
  2. Alschuler requested that the Commission have a space in Town Hall where they can store important documents. Brown will follow up.
9. 9:26: Brownell moved to adjourn. Blood seconded. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Fenton  
Recording Clerk  
Thetford Planning Commission