

**Thetford Planning Commission
Minutes – April 01, 2008**

Present: Liora Alschuler, Stuart Blood, Heather Carlos, Dennis Donahue, Lori Howard (7:45), Rick Howard, Kevin O’Hara

Absent: Wayne Parks (Chair)

Guests: Mike Brown (7:35-10:00), Laurie Burnham (7:15-9:55), Tom Gray (7:15-9:25), Doris LaMontagne (7:15-9:25), Tig Tillinghast (7:25-7:40), Andrew Toler (7:15-9:25)

7:17: Meeting called to order by Stuart Blood, Assistant Chair.

7:18: Public comment: None.

7:19: Review of prior Minutes: Carlos moved to approve as amended the minutes of March 18, 2008. O’Hara seconded. The vote passed unanimously. O’Hara moved to approve as amended the minutes of the March 18, 2008 Public Hearing on the Wireless Telecommunication Facility Zoning Bylaw. Howard seconded. The vote passed unanimously. Alschuler moved to approve as amended the minutes of the March 18, 2008 Public Hearing on the Flood Hazard Area Bylaw. O’Hara seconded. The vote passed unanimously.

7:23: Draft Wireless Telecommunication Facility Zoning Bylaw:

The Planning Commission discussed the Public Hearing. Alschuler reviewed the capture comment form: comments received at the hearing; and those received after the hearing, in writing, by the March 31st deadline. Alschuler recorded the agreed upon responses, and made resulting changes to the draft bylaw. All comments were addressed,

Motion by Alschuler to accept the resolution of the comments received and recorded and to make appropriate changes and pending those changes, approve to send the Wireless Telecommunication Facility Zoning Bylaw to the Selectboard. Donahue seconded. In discussion of the motion, Blood suggested to speed up the process, by offering the following amended motion: Blood moved to approve the draft Wireless Telecommunication Facility Zoning Bylaw, revised with the modifications that were recorded in the capture document at this meeting. O’Hara seconded. The vote on the amended motion passed unanimously.

8:20: Draft Flood Hazard Area Bylaw:

Tom Gray asked about the process. Blood explained that the Planning Commission held a public hearing on March 18, 2008 on the bylaw, and now may make changes to the draft. If the changes were substantive, the Commission would need to review them, rewrite the draft, and hold a new public hearing.

In discussion of how to proceed, the Commission agreed that because of the quantity of responses to the draft Flood Hazard Area Bylaw, both at the hearing, and in writing

following the hearing, a working group should be formed to do preliminary work in sorting the comments, and drafting responses; and bring that work back to the Commission to review.

Blood suggested that before forming a working group, the Commissioners all state a brief position in regard to the core question, of whether to prohibit building in the flood plain, and the process of making the decision. Donahue stated that he is in favor of proceeding, with refining the current draft, with no substantive changes. Rick Howard stated that he is still concerned about the word, “prohibition”, but cannot come up with a way to allow building, that will work. Alschuler stated that the points made at the hearing did not convince her to change the draft. O’Hara stated that the concerns of the Fire Chief and other professionals outweigh the other arguments; and he was not swayed by the comments he heard at the hearing, against the draft. Carlos stated that she is convinced of prohibition. Lori Howard stated that she would not make any substantial changes to the draft, at this point. Blood read a letter from Parks (who could not attend this meeting), stating that Parks is in favor of maintaining the draft, without substantive changes. Blood stated that he is in favor of the draft, without substantive changes; citing primarily the public safety problem of building in the flood plain.

Doris LaMontagne stated that as a property owner in North Thetford, in the flood plain, she should be able to build within parameters, for example to add a garage to her house. She noted that she has neighbors in similar situations. Blood responded that the draft does provide exceptions for small, accessory buildings; and he noted that the Commission discussed whether to leave interpretation of “small” to the Development Review Board.

Tom Gray stated that he agrees with Doris LaMontagne.

Andrew Toler noted Article 20 (“Shall the Town of Thetford be considered a rural town for the purposes of adopting zoning bylaws, amendments, or repeals by Australian ballot?”), that was voted on by the Town on March 1st and now allows the Selectboard to vote to have zoning voted by Australian ballot, or to choose to keep the vote on zoning by the Selectboard. Toler stated that the public should have a role.

Gray and LaMontagne requested that the Planning Commission advertise more in North Thetford, especially when they discuss an issue that concerns that area.

Rick Howard noted that residents, in other areas that are potential flood zones, besides the Connecticut River, also seem to not be aware of the relevance of the public hearings to them.

Blood said they would work on the notification issue.

O’Hara, Carlos, and Alschuler volunteered to be on the working group to sift through the comments on the capture form, for those comments that require no response other than clarification, those that require a response regarding a minor change, and those that require a

response for a major change; and to draft responses, for the April 15 Planning Commission meeting.

9:20: Report on discussion of remaining zoning bylaws: Tabled.

9:22: Reports:

- a. Selectboard: None.
- b. Two Rivers: None.

9:25: Old Business: None.

9:25: New Business: None.

9:37: Discussion with candidate for Planning Commission:

The Commission discussed whether it is necessary to go into Executive Session for interview of a candidate. On the advice of Mike Brown, they decided that it is not warranted.

In discussion, Burnham described her interest in Thetford; as a family that has lived here for many generations, and herself moving back with her family after going to college and living in other states; she is interested in preservation, conservation, and in balancing the rights of residents with the pressures of development.

Burnham departed at 9:55. Following further discussion, Alschuler moved that the Planning Commission recommend to the Selectboard the appointment of Laurie Burnham for the Planning Commission vacancy. The vote was six in favor, and Carlos abstaining. The vote passed.

10:01: Motion by O'Hara to adjourn, seconded by Rick Howard. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Fenton
Recording Clerk, Thetford Planning Commission