

**Thetford Planning Commission
Minutes – May 20, 2008**

Present: Liora Alschuler, Stuart Blood, Laurie Burnham, Dennis Donahue, Lori Howard (8:00), Rick Howard, Kevin O’Hara, Wayne Parks (Chair)

Absent: Heather Carlos

Guests: Mike Brown (8:00), Chris Sargent

7:18: Meeting called to order by Wayne Parks, Chair.

7:19: Public comment: None.

7:20: Review of prior minutes: Stuart Blood moved to approve as written the minutes of May 6, 2008. Rick Howard seconded. The vote passed, with six in favor, and one abstention.

7:22: Zoning:

The Planning Commission completely reviewed the document, “Open Items in Zoning Document”, and Liora Alschuler recorded resulting actions taken on the Zoning Ordinance draft and Tracking document. The Commission discussed Section 2.07, exemption 6, and made a change to clarify wording. Motion by Liora Alschuler to accept wording of exemption 6. Seconded by Dennis Donahue, the vote passed unanimously. Kevin O’Hara commented that it is not necessary to vote on each change. Chris Sargent agreed, and explained that if the Commission is divided on a decision, they could call for a vote; otherwise it is not necessary. The Commission agreed to that process.

In discussion of Section 3.21, Permitted Signs, the Commission stated that it is the preference of the Planning Commission to defer to the Selectboard to develop as a town ordinance. Mike Brown will bring the suggestion to the Selectboard. Regarding Article VII, Definitions, the Commission recommended that the Development Review Board might want to look at the section. Wayne Parks will contact the Zoning Administrator. The Planning Commission noted that they will review Richard Blacklow’s notes previously sent, regarding the Zoning draft.

8:55: Reports:

Selectboard: Mike Brown reported that the Selectboard has scheduled hearings on the Flood Hazard Area Bylaw and Wireless Telecommunication Bylaw for 6/23/08; and a second date of 7/14/08, if there are concerns and it is determined that second hearings are necessary.

Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission: Chris Sargent reported that he will not be available to attend the Planning Commission’s first meetings of the month any longer; but can continue to attend the second meetings of the month, if needed.

Ompompanoosuc Watershed Council: Stuart Blood reported that the group is working on a water quality plan. He noted that the draft plan was presented to the public for comment at a meeting held at Thetford Academy last week, and is accessible on line. Blood explained that if it is approved by the Agency of Natural Resources, it is advisory only; it has no regulatory effect. He commented that in conjunction with the Joint Commission Watershed Plan, these are two bodies of work that can help inform decisions.

9:05: Suggested Changes & Corrections of Flood Regulations Draft for Selectboard:

Reference to Sections (Formatting Error): The Planning Commission noted that the error will be corrected.

Accessory Buildings for Agricultural Use in Flood Plain: Stuart Blood reported on the May 15, Selectboard Public Hearing, with Kevin Geiger's presentation on Municipal Planning and Zoning, and noted that it was a good presentation. At the presentation, Selectboard member John Bacon stated concern that the draft Flood Regulation prohibits structures in the flood plain; for example, structures just for farming. Kevin Geiger stated that zoning cannot regulate structures, that are in accordance with accepted farm standards. Blood commented that National Flood Regulations exclude building in the flood plain, but the State exempts farming from Zoning, so no permit is required; resulting in a conflict between the two standards. Blood explained that following the discussion at the public hearing, he drafted revised language, to allow for farm structures, and submitted it to the Planning Commission. Blood offered to explain the revision at the Selectboard's public hearing. Liora Alschuler suggested also sending written comment to the Selectboard. Motion by Kevin O'Hara to present to the Selectboard as written comment. Seconded by Stuart Blood. The vote was unanimous in favor.

9:15: Decision making process with Selectboard:

Liora Alschuler commented that she would like an opportunity to discuss with the Selectboard, the Planning Commission's decision making process, before the Selectboard makes a decision on Article 20. Mike Brown will put it on the Selectboard agenda. She said that she could write a description of the process as a way to discuss it with the Selectboard.

9:25: Old Business: Dennis Donahue reported that he is working on the website. He is also working on the problem on the Planning Commission list, of sending and receiving email enclosures.

9:30: New Business: None.

9:30: Motion by Rick Howard to adjourn, seconded by Dennis Donahue. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Fenton

Recording Clerk, Thetford Planning Commission