

**Thetford Planning Commission
Minutes – August 19, 2008**

Present: Liora Alschuler, Stuart Blood, Laurie Burnham, Dennis Donahue, Lori Howard (arrived at 7:22), Rick Howard (arrived at 7:22), Kevin O’Hara, Wayne Parks (Chair)

Guest: Chris Sargent

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

7:18: Public comment: None.

7:19: Review of prior minutes: Stuart Blood moved to approve as written the minutes of August 5, 2008. Laurie Burnham seconded. The vote passed unanimously.

7:21: Zoning:

a. 7:21: Solid Waste Facilities:

Stuart Blood reported that he posted updated language for Section 6.05. He explained that he and Chris Sargent worked on the language, and were in agreement. Blood noted that the updated language is for the purpose of being consistent with the Solid Waste District.

Stuart Blood reported that Laurie Burnham had contacted him regarding questions, and they planned to meet, but had not yet had the opportunity. Burnham explained that her questions are for clarification, for example, 1.) How garbage is determined to be local, and 2.) The definition of fencing/ should the type be defined? Burnham and Blood will meet to discuss.

Motion by Stuart Blood to accept as current placeholder language, not permanent language, the revisions he made to Section 6.05. Seconded by Dennis Donahue. The motion passed unanimously.

b. 7:32: Certificate of Occupancy:

Wayne Parks reported that the Certificate of Occupancy working committee met. They recommend that Thetford not issue a Certificate of Occupancy. Parks noted that subcommittee member, Laurie Burnham spoke with Zoning Administrators in other towns today, and the information she received further reinforced the working committee’s recommendation. Liora Alschuler reported that Mike Brown, who was unable to stay for tonight’s meeting, due to another scheduled meeting, relayed to her that he had not yet received the legal review, which he hoped to receive by today.

Laurie Burnham reported that the Woodstock Zoning Administrator’s primary reason for issuing COO’s is to check for building violations. She noted that he is full time. The Bradford Zoning Administrator’s primary reason for issuing COO’s is to check for setbacks.

Wayne Parks reported that the working committee suggested a middle ground proposal; that in the building permit application, there be a box notifying the homeowner of the Energy Certificate requirement.

Stuart Blood commented that Thetford has a different situation than Woodstock and Bradford. He suggested a different type of document, showing that all the necessary paperwork was done, with checkboxes for septic and energy.

Kevin O'Hara explained that the working committee determined that the COO does not add value; since the State has the Septic paperwork covered, and sends a copy to the Town; and the State has the Energy Code requirements covered, and eventually will have a compliance component. O'Hara commented that there might be potential liability in having a Certificate of Occupancy, because it could imply that all the work is done to code, which would require intermittent inspections by code officials.

Dennis Donahue commented that it is the Planning Commission's responsibility to put into record that the Energy Code is State Law.

The agreement is to table the Certificate of Occupancy until the Commission hears other opinions from the lawyer or Energy Committee.

c. 7:55: Zoning- process:

Liora Alschuler recommended that the Planning Commission consider the following process to move forward:

- 1.) Timeline: Complete draft revision by November, hold public hearing in January, adopt before Town Meeting.
- 2.) Approach: At each meeting devote one-half of meeting to conceptual/major issues discussion, and one-half to details, decisions, and adoption. If more work is needed between the conceptual discussion and the decision, a subcommittee should be formed. Alschuler commented that preparation between meetings is key to the process.
- 3.) Major issues were identified by the Planning Commission as follows:
 - Site Plan/Conditional Use Review
 - Application Process- get Zoning Administrator input, and review current form.
 - PUD
 - Unified bylaw (Zoning and Subdivision)?
 - Setbacks (SIC)
 - Certificate of Occupancy
 - Parking
 - Zoning district lines

The next meeting agenda was discussed as follows:

- 7:30: Planning Consultant (see below)
- Review major issues
- Review clean draft
- Discussion of major issues: Certificate of Occupancy, parking
- Decision on solid waste section

In preparation for next meeting Planning Commission members will consider whether the major issues list is complete. Also, Chris Sargent will send an updated draft document out to members for review.

Stuart Blood and Dennis Donahue volunteered to serve on a Parking working committee, to meet before next meeting.

8:25: Reports:

Selectboard: See above.

Two Rivers- Municipal Planning Grant:

Chris Sargent reported that the application has changed to an on-line process. He also explained that the Planning Commission must decide whether to have Two Rivers do the Planning work, or open it to bidding. Sargent noted that either way, he could write the grant, though it is easier if Two Rivers Ottawaquechee Regional Commission is also contracted for the work.

Chris Sargent noted that signatures are needed on the grant from someone outside TRORC. It was agreed to ask Mike Brown.

Stuart Blood reported that he researched the bidding process as follows: The Commission would be required to get proposals from at least two contractors, would need to write a description of the project, and have a set of documented criteria by which to make a decision.

Chris Sargent explained the grant cycle: a decision would be made on the grant by December 31, 2008, and the work would need to be completed within 18 months, by May 7, 2010.

Stuart Blood commented that the application should not be made prematurely, in case the zoning revisions are not completed and adopted within the current timeline; in which case the Commission may not be ready to work on subdivision.

The Commission discussed that if they wait until next year to apply, they would be without Two Rivers' assistance. Chris Sargent noted that he would be able to give a small amount of technical assistance.

Liora Alschuler suggested having a competitive bidding process, and bringing in a consultant to speak about the timeline as a preliminary step. She will ask someone to come to next meeting. The Commission agreed to put the Planning Consultant on the agenda, for 7:30 p.m.

9:15: Old Business: None.

9:16: New Business: Dennis Donahue thanked Stuart Blood and Liora Alschuler for their extraordinary work on the Flood Hazard Ordinance, as well as the other Planning Commission members.

9:17: Motion by Liora Alschuler to adjourn, seconded by Dennis Donahue. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Fenton

Recording Clerk, Thetford Planning Commission