

**Thetford Planning Commission
Minutes – February 3, 2009**

Present: Liora Alschuler, Stuart Blood, Mike Fernandez, Lori Howard, Kevin O’Hara, Wayne Parks (Chair)

Absent: Laurie Burnham, Rick Howard

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

7:19: Public comment: None.

7:20: Review of prior minutes: The Chair declared the minutes of January 20, 2009, accepted as amended.

Zoning Assignment Reports:

1. 7:22: Site Plan Review: Kevin O’Hara reviewed the documents he submitted, which include sections and tables from Norwich’s regulations. In discussion, it was commented that the development envelope concept needs further discussion. It was explained that in Norwich’s regulations, for a preexisting lot, if there is no impact on farms or forest, the Zoning Administrator grants a waiver. It was commented that more guidance is needed for the ZA, regarding forests/wildlife habitat. It was noted that Norwich uses mapped overlays as a tool.

In discussion, it was commented that Site Plan Review and Development Envelope Review do not take away from the property owner’s right to build, but give some discretion to the town regarding where on the lot to allow building. Concern was raised that telling a property owner that they can not build in a certain area because it is forest is not right, particularly regarding existing lots; and the question was raised of what criteria would be used to define forests. It was noted that there is a discrepancy in that a property owner might be restricted from building in a forest, however would be allowed to log the forest.

Kevin O’Hara made a motion to invite Conservation Commission Chair Li Shen and the State Wildlife Department Conservation Planning Biologist to a Planning Commission meeting for information and to ask questions. Liora Alschuler seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously.

The Planning Commission discussed the Norwich Regulations, Table 1.1 Municipal Permits & Approvals. It was agreed that the format of the table serves as a tidy summary of the application process.

2. 8:30: Home Occupations: The Planning Commission continued discussion, from their January 20th meeting, in which Stuart Blood and Mike Fernandez reported on their research and proposed Norwich’s example, which has three levels: 1.) Home Office: no permit required. 2.) Home Business: Permit required. 3.) Home Industry: Conditional Use Permit required.

As requested, Stuart Blood made amendments to Norwich’s language, as recommended language for discussion.

Following discussion, Stuart Blood moved to accept the language, with a change to page 2, Section C. Wayne Parks seconded. The vote passed unanimously.

Liora Alschuler will insert the new language into the draft regulations, and make a note in the tracking document that the Planning Commission adopted new language on February 3rd, based largely on Norwich's regulations.

3. 8:45: Historic Preservation Guidelines: Lori Howard reported that the Historic Preservation Committee is still in the process of reviewing their guidelines, and they asked what deadline the Planning Commission might have for them to finish their review. The Planning Commission suggested April 1st as a deadline.
4. 8:50: Steep Slopes & Ridgelines: Mike Fernandez reported that, as he offered at last meeting, he has a meeting planned for next week regarding banking lending policies regarding steep slopes and ridgelines.
5. 8:52: Reformatting of Zoning Bylaw draft : Liora Alschuler recommended that the Planning Commission hire someone to reformat the draft zoning document. She explained that a large amount of word processing work is needed, which is technical, regarding changing codes; and involves editorial judgment. Liora Alsculer recommended hiring Ann Fenton, Planning Commission Recording Clerk. Ann Fenton declined the offer. Following discussion, it was agreed that Liora Alschuler will follow-up by getting a cost estimate from a person who does this type of work.
6. 9:00: Child Care: Wayne Parks reported on his research. Following discussion, Stuart Blood made a motion to use the language proposed in red lettering in Section 6.13 of the January 2009 Zoning Bylaw draft, and to match what is in the section to the tables. Wayne Parks seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously.
7. Mobile Home Parks, Wetlands: Wayne Parks reported that Laurie Burnham plans to report on both assignments at the next Planning Commission meeting.

9:28: Selectboard Report: Wayne Parks reported that he informed the Selectboard of Dennis Donahue's resignation letter. The Selectboard noted their appreciation of his service. Stuart Blood will advertise the vacancy on the Listserve.

9:29: Old Business: None.

9:29: New Business: None.

9:30: Motion by Kevin O'Hara to adjourn, seconded by Stuart Blood. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Fenton

Recording Clerk
Thetford Planning Commission