

**Thetford Planning Commission  
Minutes – April 7, 2009**

**Present:** Liora Alschuler, Stuart Blood, Mike Fernandez, Lori Howard (7:30), Rick Howard (7:30), Kevin O’Hara, Wayne Parks (Chair), Ben Pershouse

**Absent:** Laurie Burnham

**Guests:** Tig Tillinghast (7:15-7:35)

7:20: Meeting called to order by Wayne Parks, Chair.

7:20: Selectboard Chair Tig Tillinghast reported that the Town is looking into whether they are in compliance with Zoning regulations at the Trash and Recycling Center, with the recent addition of a stone pile (for the Highway Department), which may require a second conditional use permit. They are looking into either covering it, which may satisfy certain requirements, and would offer space to also store machinery such as the grader; or a new location for the stone pile. The Selectboard is seeking thoughts from the Planning Commission regarding locations for the stone pile.

In discussion, Tig Tillinghast explained that in the past there have been smaller stone piles, stored at the town garage, but the economic market has made it important to buy larger quantities in order to get the best prices. It was noted that there have been complaints about the noise involved with loading and unloading stones. It was explained that when the Recycling Center was first set up, neighbors were concerned about the potential of increased uses, and were given verbal assurances that would not happen. In discussion of location, it was noted that it is convenient if storage is central and near the town garage; though it is not critical.

7:35: Review of prior minutes: Stuart Blood moved to accept the minutes of March 17, 2009. Kevin O’Hara seconded. The vote passed with one abstention.

7:36: Review of Tracking Document: Liora Alschuler reviewed the changes she made to the tracking document.

7:41: Review of latest Zoning Draft: Stuart Blood reviewed the changes he made in formatting. The Planning Commission accepted it as the current draft.

8:00: Review of approach for drafting sign regulations: Following discussion, the Planning Commission decided to draft sign regulations, to be placed in the Zoning Regulations, Article 3, General Provisions; instead of recommending a stand alone ordinance, as had been discussed at a prior meeting. Issues discussed were: 1.) Different regulations for different districts, 2.) Administration by Zoning Administrator, 3.) Inclusion in site plan review.

8:15: Zoning Assignments:

1.) Process: Liora Alschuler recommended the following procedure: Following each meeting, she would insert agreed upon changes to the Zoning Regulations draft, using “change tracking”. Each Planning Commission member would review the changes prior to the next meeting, for a vote to be taken for approval of changes. Liora Alschuler would apply the accepted changes for the following meeting.

2.) Thetford Hill Overlay District: Lori Howard reported that the Historic Preservation Committee has not responded with input on the Regulations. The Planning Commission discussed the option of a stand-alone ordinance, which would be the responsibility of the Preservation Committee. It was noted that separate ordinances should be bound together with the Zoning Regulations, to ensure that the materials distributed are complete. Stuart Blood will follow up with Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission, to check if it is legal to handle as a separate ordinance, and to look at the section.

3.) Planned Unit Development: Stuart Blood reported on his follow-up assignment to research with Norwich their rationale for the following: 1.) The specific numbers selected for density bonuses of 25% for open space set aside, and 50% for affordable housing. 2.) Are the bonuses cumulative? 3.) Should there be a minimum size for the set aside, regarding that at a certain size, the land is not useful for agriculture?

Stuart Blood commented that though he did not hear back from Norwich regarding the questions, the Planning Commission could proceed with drafting a formula and rationale.

In discussion of open space and cluster development, it was noted that the set aside requirement is that there be no building; but the particular use is designed by the developer, Those details to be worked out by the DRB and Developer.

It was commented that in Thetford most developments are small, 4-8 acres, and the Commission should consider the outcomes of cluster developments of that scale.

Purposes discussed were preservation of agriculture, habitat, village character, and energy.

A working group of Liora Alschuler, Mike Fernandez, and Ben Pershouse will work on a statement of purpose and report back.

9:00: Site Review: Kevin O'Hara noted that he and Mike Fernandez worked on the language for the purpose section. The Planning Commission discussed clarification of the word "safe", and decided on "safe for the public".

9:15: New Assignments: April 21: Wetlands report (Laurie Burnham).

9:16: Selectboard Report: Above.

9:17: Two Rivers Report: None.

9:17: 3/37/09 Conference at VT Law School: It was commented that the conference was good, and the panelists informative.

9:25: Old Business: None.

9:25: New Business:

- 1.) Liora Alschuler noted that regarding the Town Plan; the Planning Commission needs to consider a timeline, scope, and method. She recommended starting by June.

- 2.) It was noted that the Zoning Administrator has input regarding Subdivision regulations revision, regarding new maps, which are easier and more accessible. Stuart Blood and Liora Alschuler will follow up.

9:32: Upcoming agendas: May 5: presentation by Mille Archer, VLCT (to be confirmed).

9:35: 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