

**Thetford Planning Commission  
Minutes – June 02, 2009**

**Present:** Liora Alschuler, Stuart Blood, Laurie Burnham, Mike Fernandez, Lori Howard (7:25), Rick Howard (7:25), Wayne Parks (Chair), Ben Pershouse (7:30), Kevin O’Hara

**Guests:** Stephanie Carter, Li Shen, Alan Quackenbush

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

7:20: Public Comment: None

7:21: Review of prior minutes: Stuart Blood moved to accept the amended minutes of May 19, 2009. Liora Alschuler seconded. The vote passed unanimously.

7:24: Presentation: Wetlands: Laurie Burnham introduced Alan Quackenbush, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Wetlands Division. Quackenbush reported that the Governor recently signed a wetlands bill, which allows for designated mapped corrections to be added to the National Inventory (which has been adopted as the Vermont State standard); and creates a process for unmapped wetlands to get protected. The next step for the DEC is to amend the wetlands rules to present to the Legislative Rules Committee. Quackenbush noted that he visited two areas in Thetford, which are significant unmapped wetlands and could be added as corrections to the State inventory; one on Asa Burton Road, and one on the Taylor parcel.

In discussion, Alan Quackenbush explained that the State inventory is missing about 30% of the wetlands. About thirty-four Vermont towns have done their own inventories, however they often include some not significant wetlands. He commented that a local inventory by local experts/Conservation Commission, has the advantage of more screening, including viewing from the road; in contrast to hiring someone, who would work remotely, with aerial photographs; though large parcels of land, and the lack landowner permission may warrant the use of both methods.

Alan Quackenbush explained that the DEC is working on education, including a homeowners/landowners guide and workshops for towns; to help identify major swamps, marshes, bogs, and vernal pools; and clues/indicators of hydrology, which can infer where land has been wet. He explained that wetlands are protected for the functions they provide, through the Federal Clean Water Act; and for their public benefits, through the State; which he commented are in the end the same. The list of reasons includes the following: floodwater, fish & habitat, wildlife habitat, migratory bird habitat, recreation, open space, and erosion. Species of the greatest need most rely on wetlands for at least part of their life cycle, and then on uplands for part; which raises the issue of needing to conserve wetlands that are contiguous with forest.

In brief discussion of riparian buffers, Alan Quackenbush reported that a legislative bill is in the works.

In summary, Alan Quackenbush noted that Milly Archer, scheduled to attend the Planning Commission meeting (July 7), would continue the discussion regarding the specifics of wetlands regulations language. He offered to continue to work with the Planning Commission on a plan to accomplish mapping. He recommended that in the interim, permitting could be reviewed by a combination of the Zoning Administrator, the Conservation Commission, and the State DEC, who are able to come look at a site in question.

9:00: Review of Tracking Document: Stuart Blood moved to accept the tracking document as posted. Laurie Burnham seconded. The vote passed unanimously.

9:05: Review of Zoning Draft: Liora Alschuler moved to accept the zoning draft as posted. Kevin O'Hara seconded. The vote passed unanimously.

9:10: Selectboard Report: Wayne Parks thanked the Planning Commission for attending the joint meeting of the Selectboard, Development Review Board, and Planning Commission at the June 1<sup>st</sup> Selectboard meeting. In discussion, the Planning Commission decided to follow-up as follows: 1.) Liora Alschuler will submit quarterly progress updates of the Planning Commission to the town newsletter. 2.) Stuart Blood will add Selectperson liaison, Andrew Toler to the Planning Commission email mailing list, as well as Mike Brown. 3.) Stuart Blood will post the Planning Commission minutes on the town list serve.

Kevin O'Hara reported that he offered to draft a project management approach, explaining that the goal is to show the big picture, and how much work is left; using a project management approach for long range projection. He submitted for review, "PUD timeline draft 1 review, dated 6/2/09". Kevin O'Hara noted that the timeline follows a concept of an earlier, similar timeline draft submitted by Stuart Blood.

9:15: Two Rivers Report: None.

9:15: Zoning Assignments: Next meeting (June 16):

- Wetland discussion.
- Mobile Home Parks: Laurie Burnham will distribute her revised draft Statement of Purpose, for discussion at next meeting. She reported that following her discussion with Fire Chief Don Fifield, he is researching national standards for mobile home parks, and will follow-up with the Planning Commission.
- PUD: Stuart Blood will send an update of draft language for standards, for discussion at next meeting.

Future Meetings:

- July 7: Milly Archer will attend the Planning Commission meeting for a discussion of wetlands regulations language.
- June 30: Wayne Parks requested the scheduling of a special organizational meeting, looking at the tracking document to determine open/unassigned issues. The Commission decided to schedule the meeting for June 30. Wayne Parks will warn the meeting.

9:28: Old Business, 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