

**Thetford Planning Commission
August 4, 2009 – Minutes**

Present: Liora Alschuler, Laurie Burnham, Lori Howard, Kevin O’Hara, Wayne Parks (Chair)

Absent: Stuart Blood, Rick Howard

Guests: Kevin Geiger (7:00-8:00)

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

7:20: Review of prior minutes: Kevin O’Hara moved to accept the minutes of July 21, 2009. Lori Howard seconded. The vote passed unanimously.

7:21: Public Comment: None.

7:22: Review of Tracking Document: No changes.

7:22: Municipal Planning Grant, which Planning Commission is seeking for writing Subdivision regulations: Kevin Geiger, Two Rivers Ottawaquechee Regional Commission, reported that Municipal Planning Grants passed in the State budget, but funding may be removed or reduced in cut backs being considered by the State.

Regarding eligibility, Kevin Geiger explained that:

- The Town Plan needs to state that subdivision regulations need revision.

-Additional justifications could include:

- The Zoning revisions made create a need to change subdivision regulations.
- State Law requires that by 2011, Zoning and subdivision regulations conform with the Town Plan.

In regard to estimating a budget, Kevin Geiger noted the following:

- Public forums are a large variable, depending on the number held, determined by how much need there is to inform the public and how large the proposed changes are, such as density clustering.
- The standards the Planning Commission is researching and writing for zoning, could be applicable to subdivision; which might reduce the time and budget required to write subdivision regulations.

In discussion, Kevin Geiger commented that some regulations are better to approach in subdivision, than in zoning, such as forests, wetlands, agricultural land, hillside aesthetics, and lot shapes. He also noted that is unusual to have wetland regulations.

In conclusion, Kevin Geiger explained that in writing the application, which is about one page/three paragraphs, he would include the following points: 1.) The Thetford Town Plan directs the rewrite. 2.) State law requires that zoning and subdivision regulations conform with Town Plans by 2011.

The budget estimate for an average length process of about one year is \$7,000, with a maximum budget of \$15,000.

It was noted that the on-line application requires one Selectboard person as Administrator, who is the only person who can create the application. Then they can allow TRORC to have writer’s rights, and TRORC can add the Planning Commission.

In follow-up, Kevin Geiger will work with Chris Sargent on the application, and will contact Zoning Administrator Richard Blacklow for input. Wayne Parks will contact the Selectboard to determine if Mike Brown is already registered as the on-line Grant Application Administrator; and if not, follow-up with Tig Tillinghast regarding his offer to be the Selectboard Application Administrator,

8:00: Mobile Home Parks, Draft Language: Laurie Burnham reviewed the draft which she distributed. The Planning Commission reviewed the language, and made a few suggestions. In follow-up, Laurie Burnham will contact TRORC with the question: What is recommended/standard regarding the maximum number of units in one location? She will then write a final draft.

In discussion of the Fire Chief's recommendations, it was concluded that Kevin O'Hara would revise the timeline to add the Fire Chief to the schedule as a person to submit the completed zoning draft to, as well as the Selectboard, DRB, ZA, and Conservation Commission.

8:40: Wetlands, Draft Language, Final: Laurie Burnham reviewed the document she distributed. She will incorporate comments into the draft, and distribute, for vote at the next meeting. Liora Alschuler thanked Laurie Burnham for presenting alternatives, and commented that she thinks the group is tending toward simpler solutions, rather than complicated. It was noted that the Planning Commission has not yet received responses from Milly Archer, VLCT, regarding questions she offered to research. Laurie Burnham noted that the State has recently reduced Milly Archer's hours, due to budget cuts.

8:57: Riparian Buffers, Objectives and General Standards: Tabled.

8:58: Agricultural Land Discussion: Liora Alschuler reported on the meeting of the working group, which included Liora Alschuler, Lori Howard and Rick Howard. She commented that the definition proposed includes a combination of criteria, and she noted that Prime Ag. land is already mapped. As a next step the working group will draft a purpose statement and definitions, and incorporate concepts.

9:25: Village Character: Tabled. At the next Planning Commission meeting, a volunteer is needed to take the assignment of drafting a statement of purpose.

9:28: Reports:

- Selectboard: None.
- Two Rivers: Wayne Parks reported that Chris Sargent confirmed that Thetford will host the workshop on changes to Chapter 117, regarding zoning in conformity with the Town Plan, which will become law in 2011, which the Planning Commission agreed to host, for the date of September 29th.

9:31: Old Business: None.

9:31: New Business: Wayne Parks reported that Ben Pershouse submitted a letter of resignation, due to moving out of the area. The Planning Commission briefly discussed proposing a change from a nine-person board to a seven-person board, as an option to consider, if they do not fill the vacancies. Wayne Parks will post the two vacancies.

9:32: Assignments for August 18th agenda:

- Wetlands: Final draft: Laurie Burnham
- Mobile Home Parks: Final Draft: Laurie Burnham
- Riparian Buffers: Objectives and General Standards: Laurie Burnham
- Agricultural Land Protection: Draft purpose statement and definitions: Liora Alschuler, Lori Howard, Rick Howard
- Forest Resources: Draft Language 1: Stuart Blood and Kevin O'Hara
- Update of timeline: Kevin O'Hara

9:35: Motion by Kevin O'Hara to adjourn, seconded by Lori Howard. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Fenton
Recording Clerk, Thetford Planning Commission