

**Thetford Planning Commission  
September 1, 2009 – Minutes**

**Present:** Liora Alschuler, Stuart Blood, Laurie Burnham, Lori Howard (7:22), Rick Howard (8:10), Kevin O’Hara, Wayne Parks (Chair)

**Guests:** None

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

7:22: Review of prior minutes: Lori Howard moved to accept as amended the minutes of August 18, 2009. Stuart Blood seconded. The vote passed unanimously.

7:24: Public Comment: None

7:24: Review of Tracking Document: Kevin O’Hara moved to accept as reported the current tracking document. Lori Howard seconded. The vote passed unanimously. Liora Alschuler will post.

7:30: Review of Zoning Draft: Liora Alschuler moved to accept the current zoning draft, which was distributed and posted. Kevin O’Hara seconded. The vote passed unanimously.

Zoning:

7:35: Mobile Home Parks, Draft Language, Final: Laurie Burnham: Stuart Blood moved to approve as amended the Mobile Home Parks section. Liora Alschuler seconded. The vote passed unanimously. Stuart Blood will integrate the approved Mobile Home Parks language into the appropriate sections of the zoning draft and post for vote on the zoning draft at the next meeting. Following the vote, Stuart Blood will send the electronic version to the other boards, either as a partial or whole document; and upload the zoning draft to the website.

7:50: Wetlands/Riparian Buffers, Final: Laurie Burnham requested to table the final draft review to next meeting; and she noted that she received materials from Stuart Blood regarding 50 foot buffers, as discussed at the last meeting, which she would like to review.

Laurie Burnham reported that she did follow-up research with other towns, as follows: 1.) In Lyme, The Zoning Administrator noted that the set back for the Connecticut River and Post Pond is 200 feet, but since he is new, he did not have much information regarding the writing of the regulations. 2.) In Woodstock, they use orthophotos and stereoscopes, then hold hearings, and then request to do field tests. They have had 100% participation by residents. It was noted that wetland protection was a priority in their Town Plan; though still the regulations were written over many meetings, over twenty years. Laurie Burnham will follow up to see if Woodstock’s building application has a statement regarding access to property. 3.) In Burlington, regarding regulation of docks on Lake Champlain, the City does not regulate private docks, just commercial. The Department of Fish and Wildlife explained that they only regulate the building of docks in State lands, which would otherwise be regulated by town ordinance, though they did not know of any towns that had.

8:00: Wildlife Habitat and Forest Resources, Final Draft: Stuart Blood and Kevin O’Hara reviewed their revision. The Planning Commission discussed the use of the word “shall” versus “should”. Blood and O’Hara explained that they chose “shall” because in the context of the particular sentence under

discussion, they felt “should” would weaken the protections so as to be virtually meaningless. They noted that the restrictions do not apply to current properties; but to subdivisions, PUD’s, and conditional use. Stuart Blood moved that the Planning Commission adopt the proposed language of Section 6.04, subsection A & B, with the language in subsection B, amended as discussed; and approve the definitions, as discussed. Kevin O’Hara seconded. The vote was Liora Alschuler, Kevin O’Hara, Stuart Blood, and Lori Howard in favor; Wayne Parks opposed, and Rick Howard and Laurie Burnham abstaining. The vote failed due to lack of majority (of the nine-member commission, which has two vacancies). Rick Howard noted that he abstained because he was not present for the discussion. Wayne Parks asked that the members abstaining review the material, and that the Commission consider having another vote at the next meeting.

9:30: Agricultural Land Protection: Liora Alschuler, Lori Howard, Rick Howard. Liora Alschuler reviewed the distributed draft. The Planning Commission briefly discussed whether prime land should be protected in the village district or not. The Planning Commission will review maps of prime agricultural land, alongside maps of the proposed new village boundaries map. The Working group will submit a first draft of the regulation for the next meeting.

10:07: Timeline update: Wayne Parks and Kevin O’Hara reviewed the timeline, and noted that the Commission is one month behind in their goals.

10:10: Assignments for next meeting (September 15, 2009):

- Wetlands/Riparian Buffers: Final draft: Laurie Burnham
- Wildlife Habitat/Forest Resources: Consider again, vote
- Agricultural Land: First Draft: Liora Alschuler, Lori Howard, Rick Howard
- PUD Standards - Affordable Housing: Definition: Liora Alschuler
- Village Character: Definition: Liora Alschuler
- Signs: Need to assign a volunteer at next meeting

10:15: Reports:

- Selectboard: Wayne Parks noted that he discussed the Planning Commission vacancies with the Selectboard, and the option of reducing the size of the Planning Commission.
- Two Rivers: None

10:20: Old Business: None.

10:20: New Business:

- Town Plan 2012: Wayne Parks reported that he would include on the next agenda a short discussion of the new town plan timeline.

10:25: 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