

Thetford Planning Commission
August 31, 2010 – APPROVED Minutes

Present: Stuart Blood (Acting Chair), Kevin O’Hara, Liora Alschuler, Rick Howard, Dean Whitlock (Clerk)

Absent: Wayne Parks, Lori Howard

Guests: None

(Numbers below refer to agenda items)

1. Meeting called to order by Stuart Blood at 7:27 PM

2. Public Comment: None

3. Review of Minutes of August 17 (7:28)

The minutes were accepted with minor amendments.

4. Review of Zoning Draft (7:30)

Stuart Blood summarized the change made in the past two meetings. They were accepted as final, pending review by the Two Rivers Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (TR)RC). Some items will need further discussion based on comments from TRORC and the general public; for example, the list of conditional uses in each district, and the bridge specifications for driveways, which have provisional approval but need the correct designation for the bridge type. Since it was appropriate, the meeting skipped to agenda item 6.

6. Draft Section 3.13- finalize Bridge Specification (7:34)

Rick Howard reported that he had not yet received a reply from the Fire Chief and would continue to try to reach him.

5. Draft of Article 2 (7:36)

- Review of Maximum Density in Village Residential (VR) and Community Business (CB) districts

Stuart Blood reviewed the discussion of the last meeting. Since then, the working group made up of himself, Liora Alschuler, and Kevin O’Hara have developed new wording that set the maximum density in VR and CO as 1 dwelling unit per 20000 square feet, but then provided an allowance for one 2-unit dwelling on 20000 square feet. This allows a duplex with 2 dwelling units on a minimum lot size without the need for Planned Unit Development (PUD) review. They had not made the same change in the Rural Residential (RR) district because it had not been discussed at the previous meeting. After some discussion of this point, Kevin O’Hara moved to create the same exception for duplex dwellings on the minimum lot size in all three districts; Rick Howard seconded. It passed unanimously.

- Consideration of additional conditional uses based on public comment (7:43)

Tig Tillinghast commented that our list is very specific, so that any use not on the lists would not be allowed; for example, a retail shop in Village Residential. There had also been comments from other townspeople regarding other specific types of uses; for example, a certified commercial kitchen for a food venture center or a blacksmith shop, a slaughterhouse, and others. The working group sent a query to TRORC about this and received the suggestion to create categories of businesses, with examples but not strict lists. The categories could be listed as permitted or conditional uses in each district instead of individual uses. TRORC supplied samples from Randolph and Bethel.

Liora Alschuler suggested that, of the two, the Bethel categories presented the best starting point. There followed a category-by-category discussion of the Bethel list, with cross references to the Randolph list. It became apparent that the categories were not exactly appropriate to Thetford, but that they could be modified. The working group took notes on the suggested changes for the categories that were covered. They would review the other categories and the other comments on article 2 from TRORC and return with recommendations at the next meeting.

7. Draft of Article 7 - Review of Red Text (8:36)

Stuart Blood referred to his email of 8/27 containing a PDF of Article 7 red text to review. He explained that, for the most part, it is boilerplate text with a few changes for style and consistency. The section on Permit expiration is still outstanding; it had been changed based on comments from the Zoning Administrator. He started by going through the items that were uncomplicated, then returned to the permit expiration section for further discussion. There was a brief discussion of the phrase “livable and complete” with reference to a zoning permit, but no changes were suggested to the text. Liora Alschuler moved to approve the red text; Stuart Blood seconded. It passed unanimously. Stuart Blood will prepare the draft to send to TRORC for their review.

8. Draft Article 6 - start discussion of comments from TRORC’s technical review (8:50)

Stuart Blood referred to 2 emailed documents containing comments, one sent on 8/3 that did not contain comments on PUDs, and one sent on 8/31 containing the comments on PUDs. The commission began to go through the comments in the first document in order, deciding which should be flagged for further discussion. The rest would be approved all together when all had been discussed. After comment 21, Stuart Blood called a halt, with the remaining items to be discussed at the next meeting. There was then a brief discussion about whether it would be necessary to have Kevin Geiger, head of TRORC, discuss this article during his upcoming visit. Stuart Blood suggested it would be better to have him discuss article 2.

9. Reports (9:20)

Stuart Blood announced the meeting scheduled on the following night by Mike and Mary Dan Pomeroy to discuss the viability of the Thetford Center store. He said he felt it was important to have a planning commission member present and would attend.

TRORC: Stuart Blood explained the reason for the recent late replies from TRORC. Their deadlines have passed and he expects future reviews to be more timely.

10. Time Line Review (9:27)

Kevin O'Hara reviewed the current progress and updated the time line to suit. District uses will take up the bulk of the next meeting.

11. Old Business (9:33): None

12. New Business (9:34)

Liora Alschuler commended the acting chair for his effective time management during the meeting. The other members concurred.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Dean Whitlock, Clerk, Thetford Planning Commission