

**Thetford Planning Commission**  
**April 2, 2013 – APPROVED Minutes**

Present: Kevin O’Hara, Michael Schunk, Dean Whitlock (Recording Clerk)

Absent: Patricia Norton, Patrick Kearney, Liz Ryan Cole

Guests: Jessica Eaton (arr: 7:23)

(Numbers below refer to agenda items.)

1. Kevin called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

With only three members present, there was no quorum. The agenda items were discussed but no votes taken or decisions made other than to accept the minutes of the 3/5/13 meeting.

2. Public Comment: None

3. Review of the Minutes of 3/5/13

The minutes were accepted as is.

4. Selectboard report: None

5. Town Plan (7:19)

a. Natural Resources. Patricia was absent so this item was not discussed.

b. Energy - Michael: Michael referred to the draft he had emailed to the group list on April

1. He reported that he had attended another meeting with the Energy Committee, at which time they had gone through the Goals, Policies, and Recommendations and made a number of small changes.

Jessica Easton joined the meeting. She explained she had come as an observer to see what the committee did and how it would affect the town and landowners. Kevin welcomed her and gave some background on how the commission collected input from residents through open houses and forums, as well as from individuals who attended the meetings. He explained the changes to the evening’s agenda due to the lack of a quorum and the absence of Patricia Norton, who was the lead member for the Natural Resources chapter.

Michael resumed his discussion of the Energy Chapter by explaining the sources for the extensive changes, those being the Two Rivers Ottawaquechee Regional Commission, the Energy Committee, and public input from an open house. He also explained that the chapter was very long (over 30 pages) and was being edited down by removing a great deal of background information about energy in general. This information had been moved to an appendix by a member of the Energy Committee, and now the Planning Commission needed to decide if the

appendix should be included. Dean asked if the appendix could be replaced by a list of references. Kevin agreed that it should be shorter so as not to overwhelm readers. There was a brief discussion of the pros and cons of using references (and where to find all of them). Jessica asked if there would be a teaching element to the Town Plan, for landowners who might not be in concordance with its recommendations without realizing it. Kevin replied that the commissioners had discussed that topic and would like to make help and information of that sort available. He noted that the commissioners were all volunteers and were learning at the same time, so he sees the benefit of providing education on the various topics.

Jessica asked if the current draft chapters were available online. Kevin explained that the chapters weren't quite ready but some were close. He and Dean summarized the discussion at the last meeting, which included suggestions for making individual chapters available on the town web site and from the Town Clerk in the week before the meeting in which they would be discussed. The commission is very interested in getting public comment before the final hearings. There is also the need to make the chapters consistent in format and layout. There was a brief discussion of issues that can sometimes arise when the public has a chance to comment. For example, several townspeople had been coming to take part in discussions of the Natural Resources chapter, and there was a very good turnout at the recent forums on changing the size of Post Mills Village District. Kevin noted, however, that the commission spent a lot of time deliberating over major changes like changes to land use districts, in order to avoid unintended consequences.

Kevin had several specific questions for Michael regarding details in the text in the Energy Chapter. Michael noted those and said that what the chapter needed now was an in-depth review by the full commission. Kevin said he will put the chapter on the agenda for the next meeting.

#### 6. Town Plan -Further discussion of the process

This item was skipped.

7. Old Business - Kevin noted that he would adjust the timeline so that Natural Resources and Energy were both on the agenda for the next meeting (April 16).

#### 8. New Business

Kevin noted the email sent by Libby Chapin that morning, announcing the workshop on planning and natural resources, led by Jens Hilke of VT Fish & Wildlife, on Wed. April 10.

Before adjourning the meeting, Kevin thanked Jessica for coming and noted that the Planning Commission was looking for one or two new members.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dean Whitlock, Clerk, Thetford Planning Commission