

Thetford Planning Commission
February 18, 2014 – APPROVED Minutes

Present: Kevin O’Hara, Patricia Norton, Patrick Kearney, Dean Whitlock (Recording Clerk)

Absent: Liz Ryan Cole, Michael Schunk

Guests: None

(Numbers below refer to agenda items.)

1. Kevin called the meeting to order at 7:18 p.m.

2. Public Comment: None

3. Review of Minutes from the 2/4 meeting
The minutes were accepted as amended.

4. Selectboard Report: None.

5. Town Plan (7:24)

a. Housing - Due to Michael’s absence, this item was postponed.

b. Forward - Patrick referred the commissioners to the document he had emailed on 2/17. He noted that it was unchanged since the last version, except for the addition of a highlighted paragraph from Kevin summarizing the major changes to the Facilities, Services, and Utilities Chapter. There was a lengthy discussion on how best to summarize the changes in order to highlight the major changes and encourage readers to move on to the details in each chapter. The group worked together on wording about the extensive changes to the Natural Resources Chapter, which had received the most public input of all the chapters. Dean suggested reordering the statements in chapter number order and making sure that it was clear which chapter included each change. Patricia pointed out that many of the statements in the current revision seemed to refer to old changes. Patrick explained that they were taken from the previous Town Plan more as place-holders; so far, he has new statements only for Natural Resources and Facilities, Services, and Utilities. Kevin said he would remind everyone to send their summaries of changes to Patrick right away.

c. Item c was skipped for the moment.

6. Other Business (9:25)

Town Meeting Display – Patricia referred the members to a couple of files she has sent this afternoon with a design and possible content for a display board at Town Meeting. She will purchase a tri-fold display panel for mounting the information. With the hope of starting a dialog

with viewers, the content presents the sort of questions that the commission is trying to answer in the Town Plan process, presents sample statements from the current draft that relate to the questions, and then asks the reader, “Do you agree? How can we do it?” Another panel on the display will outline the Town Plan development and approval process. The final panel will describe the duties of the Planning Commission, list the current members, and make an appeal for new members. Kevin noted that we will be down by 2 members after Town Meeting Day (when Patrick leaves the commission), which will make it more difficult to convene a quorum. There was a discussion of a possible candidate to approach. Patricia presented an idea for an eye-catching addition to the display that would highlight our recruiting efforts. The others agreed she should add it.

There was a discussion of having a handout available; it was agreed that Patricia will create one and Dean will print copies.

There was a discussion about the document of deferred comments from the hearings about the previous Town Plan. These were comments that were collected from the public during the hearing but were not dealt with at that time for a variety of reasons. Dean and Kevin noted that they had been discussed in the early stages of framing the new draft, but that was before several of the current members had joined the commission. Dean found the document on his computer and emailed it to the Planning listserve so the new members could review it in light of their current chapter drafts.

Returning to Patricia’s display and the description of the Town Plan process, there was a discussion of how much detail to include, particularly with regard to the Selectboard’s role and options for final approval. It was decided to keep the display as basic as possible and not include too many details.

Town Meeting is on Saturday, March 1. Kevin will use email to set up a schedule for commissioners to be at the display table to answer questions and encourage people to join.

5. c. Other Town Plan Items:

Photos – Members are to make a list of photos they would like to include in each of their chapters. The slideshow on the town website is a good resource. We can approach Tig Tillinghast and other residents who are avid photographers to take pictures that aren’t already available. Dean also offered to do that. Patricia said she has some photos from Li Shen and others on the Conservation Commission.

Maps – Dean will contact the Two Rivers Ottawaquechee Regional Planning Commission about their role in producing new maps. Kevin will send him the email for the contacts at the regional commission.

Appendix A – This is a list of Historic and Natural Preservation Tools. Dean will check the validity of the items on the list and see if updates are needed. The Thetford Historical Society and the regional commission seem to be the source for most of the items on the list.

6. More Other Business

Kevin said he would like to create an online archive of the Planning Commission minutes. He wondered how difficult that would be. Dean said that the listserv used by the Planning Commission has an archive, so all messages that include minutes are available there. He said that the Town Clerk keeps a hard copy of minutes but does not save the digital file. His own digital records go back through 2012. Dean will ask Tig about archiving the files on the town Web Site.

There was a brief discussion of creating a second appendix to the Town Plan that would include the comments from the visioning meetings held by the Selectboard and the open houses and forums held by the commission. It was decided that such a list would be too difficult to compile and would make the Town Plan much too bulky.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Dean Whitlock, Clerk, Thetford Planning Commission