

**Thetford Planning Commission**  
**May 20, 2014 – APPROVED Minutes**

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

Absent: Patricia Norton

Guests: None

(Numbers below refer to agenda items.)

1. Kevin called the meeting to order at 7:17 p.m.

2. Public Comment: None

3. Review of Minutes from the 5/6 meeting.  
The minutes were accepted as written.

4. Selectboard Report: None

5. Town Plan (8:20)

a. Comment Resolution Document – There was a brief discussion of the usefulness of the new comment resolution document. The consensus was that the document would be very helpful. No one had any changes to propose at the moment, though it was understood that future situations might call for some adjustments.

Since Patricia wasn’t present to provide technical assistance with Google Drive, further discussion of the current contents were postponed until the next meeting. Dean noted that Patricia had added the latest set of comments to arrive, so the document was currently up to date.

There was a brief discussion about how previous member Liora Alschuler had used a projector to display the document and make immediate additions during public meetings. Dean volunteered to provide a projector for upcoming meetings at which the document would be accessed.

b. Other Town Plan related items – Forward: Dean reported that he has the Land Use chapter paragraph now, but still needs to prepare one for the Scenic Resources Chapter. He is also waiting for paragraphs describing the Education Chapter and Historic Resources Chapter from Liz.

Introduction: Kevin briefly went over the sections of the current Introduction. It appears that most of the sections are useful, though some will need updates appropriate to the new draft chapters. The sections (Purpose, Background, etc.) do not need to be rearranged. Kevin thought that the first pass at review and rewrite could easily be done by a single commissioner; however, he asked that everyone read it over for further discussion at the June 3 meeting.

Appendix 2: Dean said that it should either be removed completely or be updated and moved to the Historical Resources Chapter. There was a brief discussion but general agreement. Liz said she would review the list of resources and discuss them with the Director and/or President of the Thetford Historical Society. Kevin said we would discuss her findings and vote on how to handle it during the second meeting in June.

Maps: Dean reread the answers from the Two Rivers Ottawaquechee Regional Planning Commission (TRORC), which say, in essence, that the maps must show the Town Plan's proposed vision of the future land use districts. They can prepare maps for us but in their own format, and they will not produce more than is needed for the public hearings and final distribution to town officers. In other words, the town will be responsible for production of copies for the general public. Michael said he could try to make changes and produce copies if he had the original files and could import into mapping software. According to TRORC, the current maps were created by Heather Carlos, who is on their board and is a Thetford resident. Michael said he will contact her about the original files.

#### 6. Subdivision - Preliminary discussion of the rewrite (8:10)

Kevin referred the group to draft revision 0.8.3, which he had emailed on May 6. He reviewed the history of the revision process that led to the forming of the workgroup and the resulting changes up to this current draft. He then went through the document, explain the nature of the changes to each section. He noted that the current subdivision regulations are ambiguous in many places and a key goal of the update is to provide clarity, particularly in explaining the steps applicants have to go through to apply for a subdivision. Another goal is to make the standards more clear and aligned with the current Zoning Bylaw. One action toward these goals was to remove the distinction between a major and a minor subdivision, so that all standards apply to all subdivisions. Another action was to confirm that the regulations were consistent with current state law; another was to clarify the process for obtaining a waiver. He noted that, throughout the revision process, the workgroup continually showed proposed changes to the regional commission to confirm that they were in alignment with current law and zoning practices.

The Planning Commission's task at this point is to review the changes that have been made and confirm that they are appropriate and align with current town Zoning Bylaws and other development regulations, and also to complete the revision of the few sections where the workgroup became stymied. Sections that require close review and completion include:

3.4 - Energy Efficiency. There was a somewhat lengthy discussion of the need to include this section based on comments from the regional commission and the town's Energy Committee. Dean noted that the list of energy efficiency goals lacked one important goal, which is to save homeowners money. The workgroup has hesitated over including the section as requirements for approval; the consensus among the commissioners was that the section should at least be included as recommended standards for developers, to serve as an educational function, with a cross reference to the energy standards in the Zoning Bylaw. Liz wondered if energy efficiency could be used as a justification for a waiver in siting a building in order to have a better solar exposure. Michael offered to review the section and come back with proposed language.

3.8 - Roads, Driveways, and Pedestrian Access. The workgroup did not complete this section because of a key roadblock: The town does not have road standards, so there is no supporting justification for requiring developers to build roads to a standard. There was a lengthy discussion of the language in the Zoning Bylaw about upgrading roads to accommodate increased traffic due to a subdivision. It was noted that most development in Thetford proceeds incrementally, one or two houses at a time, until a point is reached at which one more house changes the balance in the capacity of the infrastructure to handle the traffic. The entire burden of upgrading the road then falls on the final developer, which isn't appropriate. There was also discussion of the difference between road improvement and road maintenance, who bears the costs of either, and driveway standards. This section will need considerable attention.

3.11 - Open Space and Common Lands and the Definitions also need more review.

Kevin said he plans to invite the Zoning Administrator to come to a meeting to discuss her issues with what remains and also to invite Stuart Blood, who was on the working group. Everyone is to read and review the regulations in preparation for further discussion at the June 17 meeting.

#### 7. Other Business (9:22)

a. New members. There was a brief discussion of the Selectboard's role in finding and appointing new members and what the commissioners could do as outreach. It was agreed that the members would take turns writing posts for the town listserve, giving their separate points of view on what is attractive about being on the Planning Commission.

b. Spring Planning and Zoning Forum. This is coming up on June 4 and people who wish to attend must register by May 28. There is money in the budget to pay for attendance, and they are close by, at the Lake Morey Inn. Those interested should register asap.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dean Whitlock, Recording Clerk, Thetford Planning Commission