

**Thetford Planning Commission**  
**September 16, 2014 – approved Minutes**

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

Absent: 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 9/2/14 meeting.  
The minutes were accepted as written.

4. Selectboard Report: None

5. Subdivision

a. Review energy section – In Michael’s absence, Kevin referred the meeting to draft 0.8.5, which he had resent this afternoon. He directed everyone’s attention to section 3.4 and the bullets regarding energy issues. There was a long discussion of the suggested changes in wording, which covered using the state’s energy standards as minimums for new development, encouraged developers to build to higher standards, and encouraged siting of structures for optimal solar gain and so as not to block solar access from neighboring properties. Dean read the previous discussion about these points from the minutes of the June 17 meeting. Of particular concern was the clause about protecting solar access on neighboring properties that did not already have solar structures in place. There is no state statute in place to require or encourage this action. A search through the current Zoning Bylaw and Town Plan did not show any support for or mention of this action, which would make it hard to enforce and subject to legal challenge. The first two bullet items were edited for clarity. The bullet point on siting for solar access was also retained, with some editing. The clause about protecting solar access was removed. The issue will be considered for inclusion in the Energy Chapter of the draft Town Plan, which would provide support for inclusion in a future revision of the Subdivision Regulations.

b. Review draft subdivision – All agreed that the many comments and changes preserved by Microsoft Word’s tracking and revision functions made it difficult to be certain that all of the requested changes had been fully discussed and decided upon. Patricia moved that a small working group review the tracking notes and accept as many changes as possible in order to create a draft 0.9.0 for final review. Kevin seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Patricia and Dean volunteered to make up the working group.

## 6. Town Plan (8:36)

### a. Map – further discussion

The map itself was not discussed. Instead, the group referred to the annotated table 2.1 from the Zoning ByLaw, Uses by District, on which Patricia had listed the uses proposed for the new Post Mills zoning district at the last meeting. Dean asked the commissioners to first discuss that proposed density (that is, minimum lot size) for the new district. He asked if the new district should retain the current Village Residential density of 20,000 square feet (slightly less than 1/2 of an acre), be changed to the current Rural Residential density of 80,000 square feet (slightly less than 2 acres), or be set to an intermediate value; for example, 40,000 square feet (slightly less than one acre). After consideration of the comments made at the two forums held in Post Mills about this new district, it was the sense of the meeting that the density should remain at the Village Residential level of 20,000 square feet.

Returning to the table of uses, the commission addressed the two types of uses that had been left in question. (All other uses had been either left as is for Village Residential, changed from Permitted to Conditional Use, or changed from Conditional Use to Not Allowed, in accordance with the goal of avoiding sprawl-type development outside of the recognized business center of the Post Mills village.) The two undecided uses were Village Commercial (defined as “...for the primary purpose of buying or selling goods where the goods are primarily contained inside a primary structure. Such uses include, but are not limited to, the following: retail shops, general store without without gas pumps, art gallery.”) and Mobile home park (which is subject to standards described in section 5.06 of the Zoning Bylaw). After some discussion, the commissioners decided to propose that Village Commercial should be Not Allowed in the new district. Further discussion of mobile home parks, affordable housing, and the standards in section 5.06 resulted in a decision to propose that Mobile home parks be a Conditional Use in the new district.

b. (9:25 p.m.) Discuss recent comments - deferred to a later meeting. Kevin discussed the need to speed up the Town Plan revision now that the Subdivision Regulations were almost completed. He quickly went through the list of items remaining to be addressed, which included, but were not limited to, copy-editing and formatting, completing the forward and introduction, choosing photos and other graphics, and establishing a timeline for final review and public hearings. Kevin said that discussing the comments and the other items will be earlier on the agenda at future meetings.

## 7. Other business - none

The meeting was adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

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