

**Thetford Planning Commission**  
**November 18, 2014 – APPROVED Minutes**

Present: Kevin O’Hara, Michael Schunk, Liz Ryan Cole (arr. 7:19), Dean Whitlock (Recording Clerk)

Absent: Patricia Norton

Guests: None

(Numbers below refer to agenda items.)

1. Kevin called the meeting to order at 7:16 p.m.
2. Public Comment: None
3. Review of Minutes from the 11/04/14 meeting.  
The minutes were accepted as amended.
4. Selectboard Report: None

5. Town Plan (7:25)

a. Review Comments – The review started at line 48 in the comment spreadsheet on Google Drive and continued through line 56, completing the comments on the Energy Chapter. Michael led the discussion, and Dean recorded the responses.

48 - Tig Tillinghast commented on the number of grants available to towns and individuals for energy conservation projects, and the current situation whereby the Town applies on a random basis depending on the interests and energies of members of the Selectboard. He asked that the Town Plan include an action item recommending that the town take advantage of such grants and also encourage and support residents to do the same. Michael had already drafted a partial response, which was discussed and expanded to be a recommendation to include in the draft Town Plan.

49 & 54 - Scot Zens and Tom Norton had both commented on a statement on page 4 of the Energy Chapter: “Thetford contains enough forested land to produce sufficient fuel wood for the entire Town on a sustainable basis.” Both noted that there were no recommendations for action regarding this statement, with Tom Norton specifically raising the idea of creating wood pellet fuel in Thetford from its local forests. Michael reported that he had found no documentation to verify the accuracy of the statement. He found one feasibility study prepared in 2011 on the potential for pellet fuel manufacturing in Chittenden County. That study determined that a pellet manufacturing plant would require sustainable harvesting from five contiguous counties in order to be sustainable and economically viable. There was a lengthy discussion about whether cordwood could be a sustainable source of fuel in Thetford and what sort of study would be needed to determine if that was possible and economically viable given the current population

and land ownership patterns. In the end, the members agreed that such a report, to be accurate, would be very expensive to produce. No recommendation will be made at this time.

50 & 51 - Scot Zens pointed out that the percentage of power being produced by nuclear plants was about to drop, and that the state's Public Service Board was expected to balance that with power from fossil-fuel-burning plants. Referring to statements in the Town Plan about protecting natural resources, he asked that language be added to address the differences in environmental harms between energy produced from renewable resources versus fossil-fuel resources. He is concerned that statements about protecting local natural features could be used to reject renewal energy projects, resulting in greater environmental harm elsewhere. There was some discussion of the Hydro-Quebec contracts being made to offset the loss of Vermont Yankee power, but the commissioners agreed that his comments were accurate and the language he proposed would be added.

52 - Scot Zens referred to the RBES building codes mentioned in the current draft, which are not as rigorous as they could be. Michael had already drafted a partial response referring to the more efficient standards and will continue to work on this text for inclusion in the next revision. Dean noted that the new Subdivision Regulations state that the state RBES standards are minimums to be adhered to and encourage developers to use higher standards.

53 - had been dealt with earlier.

55 - Tom Norton praised the section on page 3 about Passive Heating and Lighting but noted that there were no recommendations for action based on this section. Michael will draft recommendations for the next revision.

56 - Tom Norton referred to the map on page 3 of net-metered solar voltaic installations in Thetford (from the Vermont Energy Atlas) and said he looked forward to the new version of the map upon completion of the Solarize Thetford initiative. Michael noted that the map had not been updated yet and he didn't know if it would be updated before the Town Plan is approved and printed. (The map was created by Efficiency Vermont.) If so, the newest version will be included in the Town Plan.

b. Town Nurse language revisions - Deferred to next meeting when Patricia will be available to lead the discussion.

## 6. Subdivision (8:50)

a. Review Definitions – Deferred to next meeting when Patricia will be available to lead the discussion.

b. Section 3.6, Roads and VTrans standards – Dean reported that he had emailed the Zoning Administrator to ask if she knew if and where the VTrans road standards were posted online. She had replied this morning by sending the document from VTrans. The selectboard readopts the state road standards every year by signing the document, copies of which are kept in the Zoning Office and with the Director of Public Works. She recommended that the Subdivision regulation refer to those town officials as sources of the standards, since the newest version of the document is provided by the state each year. Dean said he would revise Section 3.6 to explain this process and give the sources.

#### 7. Budget (8:55)

Kevin referred to the Zoning and Planning budget spreadsheet that had been emailed to the group on November 14. There was discussion of current and past expenses. Next year will see completion of both the Town Plan and the Subdivision regulations, which will entail printing and advertising costs related to hearings and to production of final copies of both documents. Michael expressed his opinion that the Town Plan should be printed in color. The approved drafts will also require final proofreading and formatting prior to printing, which was done by a professional editor in the case of the Zoning Bylaw. New maps will need to be prepared for the Town Plan, and some additional money will be needed to pay the regional planning commission for this service, which they have said will not be covered under their consulting agreement. Dean will contact them to determine what the cost might be. The Printing line item was increased to hopefully cover those activities. The other line items were left as is.

There was a brief side discussion of a zoning/planning seminar that Liz will be attending soon. Her registration fee should be covered under this year's budget for Training.

#### 8. Other business - none

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

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