

Thetford Planning Commission
March 3, 2015 – APPROVED Minutes

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

Absent: None

Guests: Sean Mullen (Development Review Board chair) (7:30-8:12)

(Numbers below refer to agenda items.)

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

2. Public Comment: None

3. Review of Minutes from the 2/17/15 meeting.
The minutes were accepted as amended.

4. Selectboard Report: None.

5. Town Plan (7:19)

a. Appendix A – Historic Resources - Review - Michael reported on the status of the items formerly in Appendix A, most of which have been moved to the Historic Resources Chapter, while one item has been moved to the Scenic Resources Chapter. He has been attempting to confirm that all of the programs and grants are still available as described. He spoke to John Hall of the Thetford Hill Historic Preservation District Committee and learned that they were in the process of revising their guidelines for advising the Development Review Board (DRB), including points that affect some of the Appendix A items. John referred him to architect Stephen Blancheflower for more information. Michael is waiting for return calls from him and several other contacts. There was a brief discussion of the Historic Preservation Committee’s advisory role with the DRB and the need to balance historical appearance with energy efficiency. Michael said he will move forward and keep checking on the appendix items. Kevin noted that any errors will likely be caught in the public hearing process.

Sean Mullen joined the meeting to discuss the Subdivision Regulations, so the meeting moved to Item 6.

6. Subdivision

a. DRB Response to “Sketch Plan” in narrative and definitions – Kevin reviewed the current status of the subdivision regulation revision. He then asked if all subdivision applications required an engineered plan, or if a Sketch Plan was allowed, and at what point in the process. After a brief review of the narrative and the table, Sean determined that it was correct to allow a

Sketch Plan by waiver in the preliminary phase.

b. Zoning Administrator's response to Road Standards – Dean referred the meeting to the most recent revision, 0.9.3 2/15/2015, which had been edited and commented on by the Zoning Administrator. Sean said that some subdivisions fall under Conditional Use zoning and would require changes to roads that could arguably change the character of the neighborhood. In those cases, the Subdivision Regulations need to clearly spell out the full application process, including the role of the Selectboard in the Conditional Use Review process (section 6.06 in the Zoning Regulations). At issue is the determination of which changes to roads are appropriate and fit the character of the neighborhood, and that they meet the requirements specified in section L of the new section on road standards. It should be clear in the Subdivision Regulations that the subdivision applicant must supply a complete description of the road changes that will be made if the application is approved as submitted. Dean will incorporate these comments. There was a brief discussion of the remaining steps in the revision process.

Sean left the meeting at 8:12.

There was a brief return to the discussion of the wording of sections 2.3 A and D, regarding site plans in Preliminary Plan Review.

The discussion then returned to the road standards. The Zoning Administrator stated her opinion that the driveway standards should be removed from the Zoning Bylaw. Dean will follow up with her about where driveway standards should be addressed.

There was a brief discussion of section H, regarding road access. The Zoning Administrator commented that the Town does not have any authority over access from a private driveway to a private road; only to town-owned roads. Dean will reword and confirm with her.

Section I, regarding Traffic and Road Capacity needs a clear reference to the standards that will be used to determine capacity. Dean will follow up on this as well and create a new revision, 0.9.4 dated March 3, 2015.

5. Town Plan (continued)

b. Review Titles for Land Use maps – Dean reported that Pete Fellows of the regional planning commission had in the affirmative to our request to use the same map names that are in the current Town Plan. Patricia suggested that we obtain small digital copies of the Post Mills district map and the Thetford Hill district map to include in the Land Use Chapter as clear illustrations of the proposed changes to these land use areas. Dean will ask Pete Fellows for digital copies.

c. Consideration of Proposals submitted by copy editors – Two of the five copy editors who were sent RFPs submitted one. After some discussion of the two, Dean pointed out a potential scheduling conflict with one of them, who will be unavailable from the last part of April until mid June. The other applicant had no conflicts, has done work for the Planning Commission before, and was recommended by two former members. Liz moved to award the project to that candidate, Diana Wright of Thetford. Michael seconded. The vote was unanimous in favor. Patricia volunteered to be the liaison with her. Dean will send the acceptance to Diana and cc: Patricia by way of introduction.

d. Photos - Dean reported that he had contacted Tig Tillinghast and Dan Grossman to see if they had photos appropriate to use in the Historical Resources and Scenic Resources chapters. He has received an affirmative reply and some samples from Tig Tillinghast so far. Patricia said that she also had a contact. No one has prepared a list yet of exactly what photos they would like to have. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that as many as 4 photos per chapter, in addition to any graphs and tables already in place, would be sufficient. Dean reminded the group that the photos need to be of high resolution and good clarity in order to look good when copied. Patricia will be the librarian for photos as part of her role liaising with the copy editor.

7. Other Business

1. Elections - Kevin noted that the group must elect new officers before May. He also noted that three of the terms (he, Patricia, and Dean) are up, but that he was planning to remain on the commission and hoped the other two would also to see the Town Plan and Subdivision Regulations through to completion.

2. New members - In the context of the need to attract new and additional members, there was a brief discussion of the activities that will be on the agenda once the Town Plan and Subdivision Regulations are complete. One item will be to bring the Zoning Bylaw into compliance with the new Town Plan and also to start a list of issues to address when the Town Plan must be revised 5 years after approval. Kevin suggested that these would be good topics to discuss when trying to recruit new members.

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

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