

Thetford Planning Commission
July 21, 2015 – APPROVED Minutes

Present: Patricia Norton (acting chair), Michael Schunk, Liz Ryan Cole, Dean Whitlock
(Recording Clerk)

Absent: Kevin O'Hara

Guests: Jessica Eaton (Selectboard liaison)

(Numbers below refer to agenda items.)

1. Kevin was absent and both Dean and Liz were late, so the start of the meeting was delayed. Dean arrived at 8:00, and Patricia opened the meeting for discussion.

2. Public Comment: None

3. Review of the minutes from 7/7/15

The minutes were accepted with changes.

4. Selectboard Report:

There was a brief discussion of how best to present the final draft to the Selectboard once the editing was completed. There was agreement among those present that, rather than simply sending copies to the members of the Selectboard, the Commission should attend a Selectboard meeting to list and describe the major changes and the reasoning behind them.

5. Town Plan Discussion

a. Follow-up on outstanding issues from the previous meeting.

Patricia reported that Kevin had sent corrections to the out-of-date factual information in Chapter 3, Facilities, Services, and Utilities. Similarly, she had corrected some facts in Chapter 4, Natural Resources. The corrections have been sent to the Editor.

b. Patricia - relationship to/compatibility with the New Fairlee Town Plan. Patricia reported that she had read through the new Fairlee Town Plan and discovered one area of potential conflict: They are recommending that the Ely district be zoned for industrial development. In Thetford, the abutting area is zoned Rural Residential. There is already some industrial development in the area (Britton Lumber), but most of it is on the Fairlee side of the town boundary. None the less, the discrepancy between industrial and rural zoning does create a potential conflict. Patricia has updated Chapter 4, Relationship of This Plan to the Region to acknowledge it. She read the sentence to the members, who agreed it was suitable. A vote to accept the language would be taken when Liz arrived.

c. Photos update – Michael and Patricia reported that they had sent the photos for Chapter

5, Energy, to the editor. Dean reported that he had had a brief phone call with Liz to explain how to download photos from the Historical Society's online collection. Further discussion was postponed until her arrival. Dean reported that he had completed drafts of two maps showing the proposed land use changes in the Thetford Hill Area and Post Mills Area. However, he needed clarification on the location of the new northern boundary to the Village Residential area in Post Mills. Patricia referred the group to the Land Use Chapter (9), which has the description she wrote based on the discussions during the 10/21/14 meeting. Dean suggested that the new boundary follow existing property lines.

Liz Ryan Cole arrived (8:35) and Patricia called the meeting to order.

The discussion returned first to item 5b. The possible conflict between Fairlee and Thetford zoning districts was described to Liz and Dean moved to accept the language that Patricia had proposed. Liz seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The discussion then returned to the discussion of the Post Mills map. There was further discussion of whether to follow property boundaries, which Dean noted is generally not the case. The members agreed to follow the boundaries as much as possible without creating a wildly zig-zagging line. Patricia amended the description in the Land Use chapter. Liz moved to accept the new language and the boundary Dean proposed. Michael seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The discussion returned to item 5a., issues in Chapter 3, Liz reported that she had not been able to reach Bill Bugg with a question about the availability of the TA playing fields to town residents in general. The commissioners remembered several specific instances in which the fields had been available with permission from academy. New language was proposed and accepted as a factual update.

The discussion returned to item 5c and the photos for the Historical Resources and Education chapters. Liz reported that she had found all but one of the historical photos that she had hoped to find, and that Dan and Dana Grossman would be helping her find some contemporary photos of kids at the schools that could be used in the Education chapter. Patricia set a deadline of July 24th to have all of the photos ready to be inserted into the document. There was a brief discussion of the cover photo. Dean suggested using the Town Photo taken at Thetford Academy during the Town Anniversary picnic and pageant in August of 2011. He will contact Charlie Buttrey to see about getting a digital copy.

e. Patricia referred the group to a document emailed to the planning listserv that day by the copy editor. It was a proposed appendix containing a section for each chapter that gave a description of the changes in that chapter (taken from the Forward), followed by the Goals, Policies, and Recommendations from the chapter. Liz asked that Recommendation 5 in Chapter 1 be discussed separately in a future meeting. There was a discussion of the need for such a summary. Liz noted that, in trying to make the format and style consistent in all of the chapters,

the editor had apparently chosen an inappropriate chapter to use as the template. Patricia referred the group to a style document that the editor had provided and read the section relating to Goals, Policies, and Recommendations. There was discussion of using the appendix as a document separate from the Town Plan, as an aide in describing the changes. The group decided to discuss that possibility after the current draft was finalized and while it was being reviewed by the Selectboard and regional planning commission.

6. Subdivision (9:45) - deferred to the next meeting due to the late hour.

7. Village Centers (Libby Chapin)

Patricia Reported that Libby had spoken with a person in the state agency overseeing the Village Centers program. Libby had also spoken with Tig Tillinghast about the reasons why the town center program hadn't been appropriate for Thetford when first considered several years ago. Both said that those reasons had been resolved and that the Town should now take a new look at taking part. The state agent proposed giving a presentation to the Planning Commission and Selectboard on September 15th. Dean and Michael both reported that they will be away on vacation on that date. Patricia suggested that an alternative date be discussed via email, when everyone would have their calendars in front of them.

8. Other business - none.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

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