

**Thetford Planning Commission
September 1, 2015 –Minutes**

Present: Kevin O'Hara, Michael Schunk, Liz Ryan Cole (7:30), Dean Whitlock (Recording Clerk)

Absent: Patricia Norton

Guests: Jessica Eaton (Selectboard Liaison)

(Numbers below refer to agenda items.)

1. Kevin called the meeting to order at 7:21 p.m.

2. Public Comment: None.

3. Review of the minutes from 8/25/15
The minutes were accepted as amended.

4. Selectboard Report:

Jessica reported that the selectboard, the night before, had appointed Jason R. Crance to the Planning Commission. He was not able to attend this evening's meeting at such short notice. The members expressed surprise that they hadn't been told Jason was under consideration, but they were glad to hear he would be joining. There was a brief discussion of the appointment process and also of the need for more new members, since some of the current members will be leaving the commission once the Town Plan has been completed. Jessica emailed Jason's contact information to the planning listserve.

5. Town Plan Discussion

Kevin reported that he had found the name of the conserved land on Godfrey Road and also added a new paragraph about the Zebedee Brook conservation area. He also corrected a few punctuation and grammar errors in the Facilities chapter, all of which he had sent to Patricia to be included in the review draft. Kevin said he had contacted the Cemetery Commission about the Hillside Cemetery and the name of the Thetford Center cemetery (by the Town Hall)..

Michael reported that he had found the source of the population table for the Housing chapter on the Vermont state housing web site and was able to extract more up-to-date data for the copy editor to use in creating a new table of the proper format.

Kevin noted that, as soon as these last changes are in place, the review draft can be sent to the selectboard and a date set for it to be on their agenda for discussion with us.

Liz Ryan Cole joined the meeting (7:30). There was a discussion about the possibility of Anne Sosin joining the commission. Liz said she will need child care during meetings, and asked that the other members consider people to recommend and other ways we could make it easier for Anne to take part. Kevin noted that it will be important to get new people on board and up to speed quickly, due to the projects that will be coming up once the Town Plan and Subdivision Regulations are finished.

6. Subdivision

Dean directed the members to the new version, which he had emailed that afternoon. The first comments to discuss were in Section 3.6, Road Standards. Dean reviewed the first change, which had been discussed at the last meeting, then moved onto the other comments. He noted that the changes he had made were based on comments from the Zoning Administrator, but she had expressed her wish to have more time to reread the entire regulation with more attention to detail. There was a discussion of how to get her more time for such a review, since she works only two days each week. Jessica suggested approaching the selectboard to budget extra hours for this. Kevin said that, since we can't be sure that that will be possible, the group should continue with the review as best we can now, with the understanding that the Zoning Administrator has already made some comments about changes needed in the Zoning Bylaw, which in turn might necessitate some additional amendments to the Subdivision Regulations in the future.

Dean pointed out that the Zoning Administrator had expressed very definite opinions about driveway standards and the driveway permitting process. Dean had reworded the driveway paragraphs in the Subdivision Regulations as a result. There was a discussion of the driveway issues, two important points being that any application for a new driveway or a changed driveway should trigger a notice to all abutters, and that the final path of the driveway should match exactly what was on the approved plat. Another issue has to do with having more than one driveway per lot, and the curb cut standards. These will need to be worked out with the Zoning Administrator and selectboard.

Liz noted that the section was not well ordered, and Dean agreed that, looking back at it after several months spent focused on the Town Plan, he could see ways to improve how the points could be presented.

Jessica Eaton left the meeting.

Dean will make the recommended changes and rearrange the section, then send the revised document to the planning listserv well before the next meeting. He noted that he will not be present at the next meeting so another member will need to lead the discussion of subdivision regulations and take the minutes. He will also send the revised draft to the Zoning Administrator, explain where we are in the process, and ask if she could review the document before the 2nd meeting in October, which would be on the 20th.

The final section needing review was Definitions. Each of the comments was dealt with and resolved. One involved the definition of Open Space, which needed some rewriting. This led to a review of the narrative section on Open Space and Common Land (3.9). Liz had some questions regarding statements about circumstances in which the Development Review Board could require an applicant to set aside open space and dedicate open space to the town. Kevin suggested asking the DRB and Zoning Administrator to review the language. He said he would send the next draft to the chair of the DRB to get his opinion.

7. Other Business - None

The meeting was adjourned at 9:26 p.m.

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