

**Thetford Planning Commission**  
**May 3, 2016 – APPROVED Minutes**

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

Absent: None

Guests: Jessica Eaton

(Numbers below refer to agenda items.)

1. Kevin called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

2. Public Comment: None

3. Review of the minutes for the 4/19 meeting  
The minutes were accepted as amended.

4. Selectboard Report  
None.

5. Town Plan

a. Maps Update – Dean reported contacting Pete Fellows about the missing I-91 shield on two maps. Kevin said that it was visible in the software he was using, but he was the only member whose computer would show it. Patricia requested that the Zebedee Wetlands area be marked since it is referred to more than once in the plan. The Sanborn Swamp in East Thetford is also referred to but not labeled. Dean will check on the names of both areas and pass the information along to Pete. These are the last items that need to be addressed.

b. Thetford Energy Committee request – Kevin referred the members to an email from Bob Walker that Kevin forwarded to the planning listserv on April 26. The email concerned a suggestion from the head of the Green Mountain Development Corp. that the Energy Committee and Planning Commission work with the Regional Planning Commission to include renewables siting language in the Town Plan, in order to conform with new rules about to be released by the PSB and approved by the legislature.

Jamie Thaxton joined the meeting (7:38).

After a quick review of the Energy Chapter, Jason said there was no language now about identifying preferred locations for siting of renewable energy generating equipment. The reason for including such language in the Town Plan appears to be that it would give the Town formal status in any legal proceedings for or against development of property for such a purpose. Michael will contact Chris Sargent at the regional planning commission for more information and any proposed language they have developed, to be included with other changes to consider after the warned hearing.

c. Education working group report and plan for moving forward – There will be no report from the working group until after the hearing date has been chosen. As part of the plan for moving forward, the members discussed the last steps needed to warn the hearing. These include setting the date, final editing of the draft, and printing copies of the report. Dean suggested that the document file and maps file be kept separate for now, because both are very large and will take time to download from the web site. Kevin suggested that the current version of the document be posted on the Planning page now since there had been some requests already for a version to review. Dean said he would post the document with a note that there were final, non-substantive proofreading and layout changes to be made.

Kevin said he would check with the regional planning commission about the number of copies that need to be sent with the warning to neighboring towns and other required recipients. The members calculated how much time would be needed for printing once the final draft had been approved. This should happen at the next meeting in May. Based on this timeline, the first date on which the warning could be issued would be June 7<sup>th</sup>. The hearing could be warned for July 12, with July 19<sup>th</sup> as a backup date. Kevin will check with the Zoning Administrator to see if the Development Review Board will need the meeting room on July 12. There was a brief discussion about using the Community Center in case there was a large turnout. Patricia will contact the copy editor to confirm her ability to make the final edits by the end of the month. Jessica will check with the Selectboard and Town Clerk about the number of copies and the town's preferred printing service.

6. Comment Capture Document – Patricia demonstrated the layout, ID codes, and comment review process made possible in the Comment Capture spreadsheet. Kevin explained that it was developed to help keep track of comments made while the Town Plan was being worked on, but also to provide continuity as the membership of the Planning Commission changes. Comments to be addressed in future iterations of the plan, as well as in the Zoning Bylaw and Subdivision Regulations, are stored in this document, which is now available to all members on Google Docs. To illustrate, Patricia recorded the request from Bob Walker that was discussed earlier in the meeting, giving it a number and identifying codes. A summary of the email was put into the Comment Document, cross-referenced to a saved copy of the full text of the email, also saved on Google Docs. A few outstanding comments were also addressed.

Liz Ryan Cole joined the meeting (8:27)

Kevin noted that the Comment Capture Document is used to record comments from town residents, the general public, and town committees, including Planning Commission and Selectboard members. Comments from the regional planning commission are kept in separate documents. It also records the Planning Commission's response to each comment.

7. Other Business (8:50)

1. Kevin referred the members to an email received on May 3 from Dori Wolfe, of Wolfe Energy LLC, regarding an application to install solar electric array on the ridge above the Braley farm in Post Mills, called the Thetford Strafford Community Solar array. The Town has agreed to be an off-taker (energy user) from the array. The email says, "We presented this project at a Select Board meeting, but want to make sure before we file that we are representing the town correctly when we say 'The town has approved the array location as acceptable to the town's energy plan and aesthetic plans.'" There was a brief discussion of the Planning Commission's role in approving the language. The members then reviewed the attached application, which

included a map of the area and description of the site lines to neighbors and view shielding by existing trees. Since the application seems to be in order, Jamie will send an acknowledgement to Ms. Wolfe that the language is acceptable to the Planning Commission.

2. Dean reported that the bill that would have legalized a retail recreational marijuana system in Vermont did not pass the Vermont House. Proponents of the bill have already said they will try again in the next legislative session, so the issue of whether to allow a marijuana store or farm in Thetford could come up in another year or two.

3. Liz gave a brief report of the Vital Communities Energy Committees Meeting, which she attended this day. She said the reports from other towns on their energy initiatives were inspiring. She reported that Bob Walker, the chair of the Thetford Energy Committee, received a standing ovation for the work he and his Sustainable Energy Resource Group (SERG) had done to stimulate renewable energy alternatives in the region.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

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