

**Thetford Planning Commission**  
**August 2, 2016 – APPROVED Minutes**

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

Absent: Michael Schunk, Jason Crance

Guests: None

(Numbers below refer to agenda items.)

1. Kevin called the meeting to order at 7:17 p.m.

2. Public Comment: None

3. Review of the minutes for the 7/19 meeting  
The minutes were accepted as amended.

4. Selectboard Report  
None.

5. Town Plan

a. Update – discuss any issues

Kevin complimented Patricia (and Jason in absentia) on the quality of the educational posts to the town listserve about the chapters in the proposed Town Plan.

Kevin referred the commission to an email received on July 20 from Chris Sargent of the regional planning commission (TRORC). In it, he notes one formatting error: the description of the zoning districts should be in the Future Land Use Areas section. He felt the descriptions themselves were improved but needed to be moved. There was a brief discussion of how the term “future” is used in planning documents to mean “from now going forward” rather than “sometime in the future.” His comment was entered into the comments document and noted for action after the hearing.

Kevin referred to another message from Chris Sargent, received on July 25, explaining a new requirement for approval of town plans by the regional planning commission, as specified in a new law (Act 90, Bill H.367). To receive approval from TRORC for our new town plan, the Selectboard must send documentation showing that the town has actively taken steps to implement the current town plan. Dean said that we can point to recommendations in the current plan that have been implemented and been removed from the new town plan. Kevin said that the documentation should wait until after a final version new plan has been approved.

Kevin said that the steps remain are straight-forward: take notes at the hearing, make changes as necessary, approve our final draft, forward it to the Selectboard, and then respond to their questions and concerns as they go through their approval process. If the hearing results in any substantive changes, we will need to make the Selectboard aware of them.

Liz, Patricia, and Dean described some conversations they had about the draft Town Plan at the Thetford Hill Fair and other places. For the most part, people were asking questions rather

than making suggestions. Mike Pomeroy referred to comments he had made regarding the previous Town Plan. Kevin described the history of opposition to the 2005 draft Town Plan, which led to changes in the structure of the Planning Commission (and creation of the Development Review Board (DRB)) and a complete re-drafting, which became the 2007 Town Plan. Since then, the Planning Commission has focused on the Zoning Bylaws and Flood Hazard Regulations, in addition to working on updates to the Subdivision Regulations and the Town Plan. The 2007 plan was readopted three years ago to allow more time for the update.

Kevin and Dean described the process followed during previous hearings. Patricia volunteered to facilitate the hearing on the 16<sup>th</sup>. There was a long discussion of how the hearing should proceed. Jamie will have the proposed Town Plan open on a computer with a projector, so everyone present could follow along. Patricia suggested that a second computer and projector be available, so Jason could record new comments and also be able to display previous comments and responses if needed. Patricia will start with an explanation of the relationship between the Town Plan, Zoning Bylaws, and Subdivision Regulations and how the drafting and approval process works. Then she will go over the Table of Contents, asking who has comments about each chapter. She'll take up the chapters with the most comments first. Comments will be recorded and discussed briefly to be sure the commissioners understand their intent. They will be discussed again and addressed in regular warned Planning Commission meetings in the weeks after the hearing.

Jamie referred the group to a question about the proposed change to the Thetford Hill district received via email on July 27 from Deb Powers. Patricia demonstrated how to enter it into the comments document. The group drafted an answer, which Patricia recorded in the document and then emailed to Deb Powers.

## 6. Subdivision Update (8:35)

Jamie projected the most recent draft of the Subdivision Regulations on the wall, and Kevin led the members through a continuing review of the existing comments.

3.7(A): Water Supply – A slight change to wording in order to clarify the intent. Also the addition of “undue” to modify “adverse impact”.

3.7(B): Individual Wastewater Disposal Systems – A brief discussion of Vermont’s rules regarding wastewater and septic systems, which the town cannot override. (No change to text.)

3.8(A)(1): Utilities, Location – Would require that all utility lines be installed underground. Slight rewording to make it more clear that that DRB can waive this requirement, since burying lines throughout a subdivision is usually very expensive, especially were ledge is encountered. Also inserted a note to the DRB asking if making underground installation a requirement was the best starting point for an application.

3.9(A)(1): Open Space & Common Land Shown on the Town Plan – There was a long discussion about the meaning of Open Space in this context. The definition in the Zoning Bylaw does not match the definition here in the Subdivision Regulations. The Town Plan maps do not indicate areas proposed for playgrounds, parks, or other open space. A note was inserted to discuss this with the DRB.

## 7. Other Business (9:30)

Kevin referred the group to a memorandum of intent received from Wolfe Energy Corp. regarding a proposed solar energy array that would provide electric power to the Ohana Camp on

Robinson Hill Road. This was for informational purposes only; there was no action to take.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

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