

Thetford Planning Commission
May 2, 2017 – APPROVED Minutes

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

Absent: None

Guests: Jesse Anderson, Jessica Eaton (arr: 7:38)

(Numbers below refer to agenda items.)

1. Kevin called the meeting to order at 7:25 p.m.
2. Public Comment: Jesse Anderson said he had come to observe the meeting due to an interest in joining the Planning Commission.
3. Review of the minutes for the 4/18/17 meeting
The minutes were accepted as amended.
4. Selectboard Report: Postponed until Jessica Eaton’s arrival.

Other Business: Election of officers

Kevin said that it was time to elect a new slate of officers. Since he would be stepping down from the commission as soon as the Town Plan had been approved, he said he would not run for any office this year. After a brief discussion of the duties of each office, Liz nominated Jason for Chair and Jamie for Vice Chair. Dean seconded the nominations and then nominated Liz for Clerk, which Jamie seconded. There being no further discussion, Kevin called for a vote on the full slate. It was approved unanimously. The new slate will assume responsibility at the next meeting. Kevin continued officiating for the duration of this meeting.

5. Town Plan (7:31)

a. Update of changes with copy-editor – Dean reported that he had delivered the marked-up copy to the copy editor and met with her twice to go over questions and some of her suggested rewordings. A few questions still remain. She had recommended a change to several footnotes that contained web addresses, where the addresses no longer went to the referenced page. In some cases, a new version of the material (e.g., regulations, standards) was available; in other cases, the files had been moved to a different or renamed site. Dean had circulated the newest draft via Google Drive and was ready to go through the document to review and resolve all of Diana’s suggestions and questions.

Before starting the review, Jamie asked if Kevin anticipated that the version finally approved by the Planning Commission might be sent back by the Selectboard for more changes after their review and hearings. Kevin said he couldn’t be sure but hoped not. He noted that Bill Huff has sent a letter to the Selectboard asking that the Planning Commission hold another hearing before approving. Kevin said he did not feel that the changes made in response to the comments collected at the Planning Commission’s hearing were substantive enough to require a

second hearing at this time, and that the Selectboard's hearings would be sufficient opportunity for more residents to make comments. The Plan might come back for changes, but he thought the majority of the people who have made comments over the course of the several years of meetings, forums, and hearings would feel their comments were addressed sufficiently. The others commissioners agreed.

Jessica Eaton joined the meeting (7:38). Kevin explained the current task at hand.

Returning to the review of the draft Town Plan, a note on the cover page states that the Town Plan is available on the Town's website. There was a brief discussion of whether the current plan (soon to be replaced) will be left on the website after the draft plan has been finally approved. All agreed that it should remain available for review until such time as the Selectboard decided it was no longer needed, after which it should be archived.

Dean referred the members to a response he had received from Martha Howard of the Thetford Historical Society on May 1 regarding the historic status of the Thetford Center Community Center and referred to on page 39. She sent the link to the National Register of Historic Places, showing the official registration certificate for the village of Thetford Center, dated 1998. Dean will correct the reference. Dean is still waiting to hear back from Libby Chapin of the Conservation Commission about the proper wording for the Shoreline Protection Act and resolution of the Lake Fairlee Dam project. He is also waiting to receive the new version of the Slope and Water Features map from Pete Fellows of the regional planning commission.

On page 76, a recommendation regarding shoreline protection on Lake Fairlee appears to be superseded by the new Shoreline Protection Act, which is described in the narrative. The recommendation was moved to the comments resolution document to be reconsidered for the next plan if the Shoreline Protection Act has not proved sufficient.

On pages 79 and 80 there is a policy and a recommendation about beaver wetlands that say the same thing. Dean suggested that the recommendation be removed since it superseded by the policy. The commissioners agreed.

In several places, the copy editor had noted that the term "Accepted Agricultural Practices" was replaced by "Required Agricultural Practices" in a 2016 update to the statute. The changes were accepted. All other comments related to changing footnotes to include up-to-date links. Dean will finalize the changes and put the new version into the Dropbox folder.

4. Selectboard Report

Jessica Eaton reported that the Selectboard would like the Planning Commission to send a reply to Bill Huff regarding his request that the Planning Commission hold another hearing. After a brief recap of the earlier discussion, Liz volunteered to write a draft reply for discussion at the next meeting.

5. Town Plan (8:50)

Jason left the meeting.

5b. Comments Resolution Document status – Kevin noted that the document needed to be ready before the approved draft was sent to the Selectboard. Jamie projected the document on the wall so that everyone could follow along. The wording of each resolution was discussed and finalized, starting at the earliest comments. The review ended at comment 41 due to the late hour. It will continue at the next meeting.

6. Subdivision: Postponed due to the late hour.

7. Other Business (9:30)

Kevin said he had received a mailing about a series of Planning Forums being offered by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns. Some appeared interesting. Liz offered to look into them and report to the members.

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

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