

**Thetford Planning Commission
January 23, 2018 – APPROVED Minutes**

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

Absent: None

Guests: Jessica Eaton (Selectboard liaison)

(Numbers below refer to agenda items.)

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

2. Public Comment: None

3. Review of minutes from the 12/19 meeting.
The minutes were accepted as amended.

4. Selectboard Report

Jessica Eaton had not yet arrived. (See below for her report, included in Item 7.)

7. Town Plan: Forest Block language

Jason quickly reviewed the situation with the draft Town Plan: 1) The state now requires the inclusion of language about preserving large forest blocks, and 2) The draft was not approved within the required time period so will come back to the Planning Commission for another hearing. Jason said the newly required language on Forest Blocks will have to be inserted before the regional planning commission (TRORC) can approve the Town Plan. They have sent suggested forest block language to be inserted into the Natural Resources chapter. We will take the time to insert the changes planned by the Selectboard to resolve the comments they received at their first hearing, then write the necessary report and warn a hearing.

Jessica Eaton joined the meeting.

Jessica reported that the Selectboard would not be working on the Town Plan again and that there were some comments they had not discussed yet. She said that they had gotten through the comments up to and partially through the Natural Resources chapter but not the following chapters. They do not have any time available before Town Meeting to get to the others. Dean noted that the report required to accompany the draft that will be discussed at the warned hearing is almost completely about Land Use changes. Since that is one of the last chapters, there will be very little to change in the report.

Jessica left the meeting.

6. Subdivision – Review proposed changes

Liz had not been present at the subcommittee meeting on 1/9/2018 to address the remaining issues in the draft. Jason referred the group to version 11.1, which is the latest draft and was emailed after the meeting on 1/9. The first item was the change in the definition of Subdivision. There was a discussion of how boundary line (or lot line) adjustments fit into the

subdivision process. A boundary line adjustment is included in the definition because it is, technically, a subdivision (i.e., two lots change size and shape, affecting the taxation of both lots even if they both belong to the same owner). As per 2.1(B), the Zoning Administrator can review and approve the application in certain conditions defined by law. In other cases, the Development Review Board (DRB) can waive certain requirements to simplify and speed the process. The text in the definition was changed from “lot line” to “boundary line” to match the existing text in section 2.1(B).

Liz questioned the standard for roads serving three or more dwellings (3.6(B)). The text defines a driveway as limited to 1 or 2 dwellings; if there are more dwellings, it is a road and must meet the Town’s certified road standards. After some discussion, it was determined that a private road does not need to meet class 2 town road standards (the text uses “should” instead of “shall”) and that, even if they do meet the class 2 standards, the Town is not required to take over a road at the request of a developer (3.6(C)).

There was a lengthy discussion of 3.6(B), third paragraph, which describes how a developer must set aside land for a school or make a payment toward expanding school capacity if a development would add 10 dwellings in the Town. Such an impact fee is allowed by law in certain circumstances. Given the lower birth rate and aging of the Baby Boomers, school populations are shrinking and it is no longer a given that 10 new dwellings will crowd Thetford’s schools. The text was adjusted to state the situation more clearly. Jason will check with TRORC to find out if the circumstances apply to Thetford.

There was a brief discussion of the definition of “Slope”.

Liz said that she agreed with the proposed changes. Dean moved that the commissioners approve the proposed subdivision ordinance, with the exception of section 3.9(B)Para.3. Liz seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

Dean will contact the copy editor to get a quote for preparing the final draft and also an estimate of when that could be done.

7. Forest Block Language, additional discussion

Jason reiterated that the plan would be to insert language similar to that from TRORC, sent by Pete Fellows on 12/18/2017. We will have to review the Natural Resources chapter to find the most appropriate spot for insertion. He suggested that we first insert the Selectboard’s changes to the text.

8. Discussion of Town Plan Approval Process

Jason outlined the next steps: Get the changes from the Selectboard, review them and insert them into the text, add the Forest Block language, update the report to accompany the new draft, warn and hold the hearing, resolve any new comments, accept the new draft and forward it to the Selectboard for their approval process. Jason stressed that we would encourage people to focus on changes in the text and not to repeat comments they had already made and that had already considered by the Planning Commission and the Selectboard.

Dean will contact the Selectboard recorder, Marty Moses, to get their changes document.

9. Task List Update

Jason said that we will need to focus on getting a new Town Plan approved, while finalizing the Subdivision Regulations.

A subcommittee will meet on February 2 to work on inserting the Selectboard changes into the Town Plan. Due to absences, the next regular meeting will be held on February 21, in the Town Hall, and the March 6 meeting will be held at Latham Library, if it is available.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

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