

Thetford Planning Commission
April 11, 2018 – APPROVED Minutes

Present: Jason Crance (Chair), Jamie Thaxton, David Forbes, Dean Whitlock (Recording Clerk)

Absent: Liz Ryan Cole

Guests: Cathee Clement (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 the minutes from the 3/6/18 meeting.

The minutes were accepted without revision.

Review of the notes from the 3/27/18 subcommittee meeting

The minutes were accepted as amended.

4. Selectboard Report

The members welcomed Cathee Clement, the new liaison from the Selectboard. She asked how she could best be of service to the commission, both generally and with regard to the Town Plan, and how she could get up to speed most quickly. Jason said that she would be very helpful, while the commission was inserting the Selectboard's changes into the draft, by clarifying any language that wasn't clear and also by having the Selectboard review each chapter as the changes were made. Dean said that, because she would have many other Selectboard issues to worry about, the members wouldn't expect her to become an expert on planning but would welcome her opinion about the changes that were being made. Jason noted that the draft plan would be the focus of the meetings until it was finished, because all of the other planning documents were required by law to be compliant with the plan. Until it was finished, they couldn't be updated.

5. Review and discuss proposed changes to Town Plan from Selectboard.

There was a discussion of the best way to edit the draft plan document. Jason asked if the copy-editor should be asked, but Dean pointed out that she was working on the Subdivision draft already and had said she was very busy with other jobs. He offered to insert all of the changes that were simply straightforward changes. Changes that required research he would leave to the others, and hopefully they would be ready for insertion before he was done with the simple editing. He also said he would contact Marty Betts to get the comments for the Natural Resources chapter (5). The changes go halfway through that chapter so it would be good to have the source comments at hand. Jason said his goal was to be able to warn the hearing in late June so the hearing would take place in early August. He asked Dean to make sure all of the insertions and deletions were redlined so they could be reviewed easily, and to flag but leave any recommendations marked for deletion so they could be discussed before they were actually

deleted. Once Dean had made all of these edits, the commissioners would try to apply the logic behind the changes to the remaining chapters so that the Selectboard's review process might be made easier. Jason suggested that the edited chapters be taken before the Selectboard as each is finished so that they can review and approve the changes before the complete draft is warned for hearing. Cathee said she would help make that happen.

The Energy Committee's enhanced energy chapter would be included if it was ready in time. If not, it would be inserted by amendment when it was completed. The Energy Chapter would be dealt with last to give them more time and also because it will be completely changed by what the Energy Committee produces.

Cathee said she was working on an announcement for the town listserv that would ask for more volunteers to be commissioners. The plan discussed at the Selectboard meeting the previous meeting was to see if two more members could be appointed rather than to reduce the number of members to 5 (so that the committee would be more likely to have a quorum at every meeting). If two members aren't found before May 1, the Selectboard will reduce the size of the commission. The language for the announcement was discussed, and the commissioners agreed that they would rather have more members in order to have more viewpoints and to share the tasks more widely.

Jason said he had identified three items in the Selectboard's list of changes that would require research; all of them involved graphs in the Housing Chapter that needed updated data. Jamie, David, and Jason each took on one graph. Dean said he would connect David with the former commissioner who had written the final draft of the Housing Chapter.

Dean noted that, in the past, the commission had occasionally met on the 5th Tuesday of each month when there was a lot of work that needed to be finished more quickly. Jason said he would consider that but did not want to make it a regular practice.

There was a brief discussion about using the 45-day warning before the hearing to educate townspeople about the plan and the changes that had been made, as well as the need for people to attend the hearing even if they had already come to forums and meetings to make suggestions.

6. Draft Forest Block Language for Town Plan

Jason said that the new required Forest Block language would be put on hold until the other edits were completed. Jason explained to David and Cathee the situation about this new language and where he had gotten so far in his discussions with the Two Rivers Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (TRORC). He also said that Sue Fritz of the Conservation Commission, who had offered to help the commission with the mapping applications, had elected to step away from town functions for awhile.

7. Other Business

Dean reported that he had been contacted by two members of the Mount Ascutney Prevention Partnership, whom he had worked with in the past on substance abuse and community health issues, about a town-plan-related project they were working on with TRORC. They were developing a boiler-plate chapter on community health issues that could be inserted into town plans and made specific to each township. TRORC was currently working on the first draft and would be finished soon. They asked if the Thetford Planning Commission would be willing to review the chapter and provide feedback, and also would consider including it in the next version of the Thetford Town Plan. Dean said he had explained the current situation with Thetford Town Plan and said he would bring up their request at the next meeting where there

was a quorum. After a brief discussion, the members all said they would be happy to review the draft chapter and provide feedback. Adding another chapter to the plan might have to wait until the next version after the current draft. Dean said he would forward the chapter as soon as he received it.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

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