

Thetford Planning Commission
April 24, 2018 – DRAFT Notes

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

Absent: Liz Ryan Cole

Guests: None

(Numbers below refer to agenda items.)

1. Jason called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.
2. Public Comment
None.
3. Review of the minutes from the 4/11/18 meeting.
The minutes were accepted as amended.

4. Selectboard Report

Liaison Cathee Clement could not attend but had sent an email to Jason with the draft text of an ad inviting applications for new members of the Planning Commission. Jason read the draft text, which was approved after a brief discussion.

The email also contained the Selectboard's response to the Commission's request that they consider reviewing each chapter of the draft plan as it was completed. They declined, expressing their concern that the regional planning commission (TRORC) should review the updated draft first. The Selectboard expects that TRORC will ask the Commission to remove a lot of the text, as they reportedly have done with the regional plan. Jason started the discussion by reporting that he had had a long conversation with Kevin Geiger of TRORC regarding the length of Thetford's draft Plan. Kevin has said that the draft was long but not as long as several other plans. Hartford's Plan, for example, was nearly double the length of the Thetford draft. Kevin explained that TRORC was removing detail from the narrative of the regional plan (e.g., in the descriptions of the current state of the region) but was not removing any of the goals, policies, and recommendations. He said it would be good practice to include just enough narrative to support the goals, policies, and recommendations, and suggested that 100 pages would be a good goal for the total length of the Plan. Dean said that would reduce the Plan by about one-third. Jamie noted that the inclusion of graphs and photos would increase the number of pages but added valuable content without adding extraneous text. Jason said that, once we are through with our changes and have a clean copy, Kevin will give the new draft a quick "desk review". The current goal is to send him that copy by the end of May.

Jason read the text of a reply to the Selectboard, which was approved and sent.

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

Dean reported that David had sent him an updated graph of total housing units from 2000 to 2017, along with the list of sources he had used to find the data. He will insert it into the new draft. Jamie reported that he had found some information regarding residential care services and

facilities but that it was in a different format than the graph currently in the draft Plan. After a brief discussion, it was decided that having updated information was more important than strictly following the format of the original. By changing the format, we will also remove the names of specific vendors of the services, as requested by the Selectboard. Jamie will update the data and send a new graph to Dean to insert. Jason reported that, after a long search online and a call to the Vermont tax office, he learned that the graph of housing values by year that he was to update was the result of a special project supplied to Thetford by that office. He was connected to the right person who is now working on an updated version through 2017.

Jason said that he had originally planned to put off working on the Selectboard's changes to the draft Plan until all of the members were present; however, given the need to stick to a tight schedule, he felt it best that the current quorum start that task now. Dean suggested that the remaining agenda item be dealt with first so the rest of the meeting could focus on the Plan. The others agreed.

6. Enhanced Energy Update

Jason referred to members to an email sent by Phebe McCosker of the Thetford Energy Subcommittee working with TRORC on the Enhanced Energy Plan (EEP). Their schedule indicates that the EEP won't be ready until mid to late August at the earliest. Jason read that to mean that the EEP would have to be added to the Town Plan by amendment, after it has been approved by the Selectboard. Dean wondered if the Selectboard would be able to add it during their approval process, without having to send the draft Plan back to the Planning Commission. He said he would check with Phebe and with TRORC to determine what the required process would be.

5. Town Plan Review- Continued

Dean referred the members to the latest version of the draft Plan, which he had uploaded to Google Docs and made available to everyone. After determining that the file was too large for Google Docs to display, the members downloaded it to their own computers and began a review of the Selectboard's changes, which Dean had already inserted into the document. The review began at the first change, which is at the start of Chapter 1 – Housing. Most of the changes were approved with little discussion. The three graphs had already been discussed. In some cases, Jamie or David will confirm the validity of statements rather than delete them. Some rewording was necessary but first drafts were made during the meeting.

The changes in Chapter 1 were all reviewed by 9:00 p.m. Dean will update the document while retaining all changes until they are approved in toto.

The next two meetings will be held on May 8 and May 22, which are not the usual first and third Tuesdays. The change is temporary, to accommodate the schedules of traveling commission members. Jason said that the draft Community Health Chapter being developed by TRORC and the Mount Ascutney Prevention Partnership will be on the agenda for May 8, along with the continued review of the draft Plan changes.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

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