

**Thetford Planning Commission
September 18, 2018 – APPROVED Minutes**

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

Absent: None

Guests: None

(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 8/21/18 meeting.

There was a question regarding a topic that Liz Ryan Cole had raised. She had not yet arrived, so the review was tabled until she was present.

4. Selectboard Report

Jason reported that he had spoken with Cathee Clement recently. There were no new concerns in the Selectboard about the Town Plan and the desire to have a joint meeting with a representative from the Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional planning Commission (TRORC) once a revised draft was ready. Unless something specific to planning comes up, she will be focused on Town Manager business.

5. Review and modify Town Plan draft based on Selectboard and TRORC comments

1. Required Forest Block Language – Jamie referred the commissioners to the document he had emailed this evening. He had made a copy of Chapter V's narrative section on *Flora and Fauna*, plus the associated Goals, Policies, and Recommendations, and had made changes suggested by the new state regulations and the sample language from the new Tunbridge Town Plan, provided by TRORC. The additions and deletions were visible in Word's Review features. Jason moved that the new draft language be inserted into Chapter V, Jamie seconded, and the text was opened to discussion. Jason suggested that there be a footnote added to cite the Vermont statutes that make this language a requirement. He proposed the text and location; Jamie provided the titles of the statutes. The Town parcel map was studied to determine how many forest parcels were owned by the town. Jamie found the 2008 Land Management Plan on the Conservation Commission's web page and reported there were a total of 575 acres of Town Forest, made up from four separate parcels. This information was added to the draft Forest Block language. Dean pointed out that there were also state and federal parcels; he will find the acreages and add them to the draft language, along with a sentence referring to lands that were privately conserved through land trusts, such as the Bill Hill and Ely Mountain parcels. A vote on the motion to include the draft language in Chapter 5 was tabled until these changes could be made and the draft reviewed again as a whole.

The discussion moved on to the Goals, Policies, and Recommendations associated with the Flora and Fauna narrative.

Liz Ryan Cole joined the meeting.

Several goals and recommendations were removed by combining their key points with other recommendations that involved the same topic. Others were removed because they were redundant or because there was no supporting narrative. Two were moved to the Flowing Waters section of the chapter, where the supporting narrative was actually located. There was a long discussion about the Town's ability to pass regulations that might conflict with the Vermont hunting laws. Other than posting town lands to prohibit hunting, there is nothing the Town can do to override the state laws. Posting town land would be supported by the recommendations about maintaining species diversity. One recommendation was removed because setbacks along rivers are now controlled by the state's Shoreline Protection Act.

2. Narrative for Light and Noise section – Dean referred the commissioners to the document he had emailed on August 28 with draft language for narrative to support the Goals, Policies, and Recommendations related to Light and Noise. There was little discussion. Liz suggested removing the final sentence in the fourth chapter, since there was no citation for the health effects it describes, and the deletion was made. Dean will insert the text into Chapter V, which concludes the review and rewrite of that chapter.

3. Review of minutes of 8/21 meeting (continued)

There was a brief discussion of the wording about the question Liz had asked about conserved lands. The minutes were then accepted as amended.

6. Other Business

Regarding current use, Liz explained that Vermont reimburses towns for property tax reductions due to Current Use. She noted that New Hampshire did not, though Maine and Massachusetts did. Conserved parcels, however, and parcels that belongs to the Town are not taxed or reimbursed, so the income to the Town is reduced.

There was a brief discussion about the meeting schedule. To make up for missed meetings due to lack of quorum, there will be a meeting on Thursday, September 20th. However, Liz will not be able to attend, and Jason and Jamie must attend the open house for parents of 7th-grade students entering TA. The open house ends at 8:00, so the meeting will begin at 8:15 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:19 p.m.

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