

**Thetford Planning Commission  
October 30, 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 was expected late so Jamie called the meeting to order at 7:24 p.m.

2. Public Comment  
None

3. Review of the minutes from the 10/23/18 meeting.  
The minutes were accepted as written.

Jason joined the meeting.

4. Selectboard Report

None. Jason reported that he had had an email conversation with Cathee Clement, who apologized for not being able to make any recent meetings. He described to her the schedule that the commission had defined during the 10/23 meeting. Jason gave a brief summary of the schedule for Jamie, who had missed the last meeting.

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

The review took up where it had left off at the end of the previous meeting in the Goals, Policies, and Recommendations section in Chapter VIII, Transportation. There was a detailed discussion of Policy 5, regarding the widening of Class III roads to Town Standards (which are the VTRANS road standards, recertified each year by the Selectboard as the official town standards). Jason noted that there has been resistance in the past by residents and the Selectboard against widening Class III roads unless it is absolutely necessary. The issues seem to be maintaining rural character and cost. There appears to be no legal requirement for the Town to widen Class III roads to meet the certified standards. Dean noted that the Zoning Bylaw, in the section on Planned Unit Developments, addresses the issues of traffic impact assessments and road widening. Policy 6, which requires developers to produce a traffic impact assessment if their development would be a major traffic generator, was modified to specifically address Class III roads and Policy 5 was moved to the Recommendations section for the Selectboard to reconsider.

The final policy (originally 7, now 6) was reworded to focus its intent. The mention of bicycle trails was removed since the trails project had dead-ended and the resurfacing of Route 113 had resulted in wider bicycle lanes wherever it was possible.

The list of specific road sections in Recommendation 2 was replaced with the more generally applicable, “on steep hills where erosion has been a problem in the past.”

Following the Selectboard’s directions, recommendations to “encourage” or “educate” were reworded or removed. Recommendations 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 11 were deleted because they were controlled by other organizations. Recommendation 9 is a task the Energy Committee will do anyway as part of their job description. Recommendation 8 is very vague and should be discussed again in a later meeting.

The discussion moved to the Chapter IX, Historic Resources, beginning with a review of the narrative. Liz combined the first two paragraphs in the second section, removing some duplicative language. The first sentence was trimmed from the following paragraph. Some of the details about the day-to-day operations of the Thetford Historical Society were removed. Text related to the services and resources provided to the Town by the THS were kept.

Dean explained that the long section on Tools for Historic Preservation (grants, programs, and organizations that a Town could use to preserve historic districts, buildings, etc.) had been a separate appendix in the previous version of the Town Plan. The commissioners agreed that, once again, a large amount of detail could be removed, and a large portion of the time remaining was spent doing that. One important section left in explains that the National Register of Historic Places is strictly a voluntary action; landowners cannot be coerced by the Town or Federal governments to register their properties or, even if the property is registered, leave it as is or provide access to the general public.

The section on transfer of development rights was removed, but was saved to be discussed fully in the next go-round after this draft plan has been approved. It is an important land use issue, affecting planned unit developments, historic preservation, and conservation of undeveloped lands, but several vital parts are already being dealt with through the Zoning Bylaw and the state and regional land trusts.

It being after 9:00 p.m., Jason ended the review for the night. The next meeting will be held on November 13<sup>th</sup>, the second Tuesday of the month, because election day is on the first Tuesday. The meeting after that will follow the usual schedule and be held on the third Tuesday, November 20<sup>th</sup>.

6. Other Business  
None

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

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