

WAITSFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, January 6, 2009

1. CALL TO ORDER: Steve Shea called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm at the Waitsfield Town Office.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Shea (Chair), Robin Morris, Peter Lazorchak, Brian Fleisher, Hadley Gaylord, Jr., and Russ Bennett. A quorum was present.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ted Tremper.

STAFF PRESENT: Vickie Trihy, Planning and Zoning Administrator

OTHERS PRESENT: Sharon Murray, planning consultant; Lisa Loomis; Tony Italiano.

2. WORK PLAN FOR 2009

The board discussed prioritization of initiatives on the 2009 agenda. Sharon Murray passed around a list of those initiatives. They also discussed the merits of working in committees versus involving all the members in each topic, and there was general agreement that committees seemed to be more efficient and productive, but that some topics ought to be discussed first at the board level to establish foundational knowledge and general goals before assigning them to committees to do more nuts-and-bolts work. Sharon stated that there are established paths to follow in the planning process for each kind of initiative. It was agreed that Vickie would add a committee update report to the meeting agenda once each month.

Commercial Lodging and Limited Business District. It was agreed that Robin would head the committee to revamp the Commercial Lodging and Limited Business District zoning and enlist some landowners in that district to serve on the committee. The first work product of that committee would be a timeline and identification of milestones. Robin explained to Sharon that the Commercial Lodging District zoning was outdated because lodging was no longer a predominant land use there. It was agreed that this item should be first on the board's agenda, because landowners in those districts have already provided input to the Planning Commission and there is an expectation that this topic will be pursued. Robin will work directly with Sharon on this project.

Brian informed the board that he has started a petition to get an item on the town meeting ballot urging the Planning Commission to make the creation of enterprise zones a priority, because he feels the board has resisted this idea without justification. Several members of the group responded that they have repeatedly asked for more specific information about this concept, specifically how it would conform to state law, and pointed out that a ballot item would also require more specific information than he has offered thus far. Russ reiterated the request

to define the concept in writing and bring it to the board for consideration. Robin restated a suggestion that this concept be explored on a smaller scale first, as part of the revision of the Commercial Lodging District, where a model could be worked out for two or three businesses and tested before taking it town-wide.

Irasville Business District. Steve said the board's next priority should be articulating the need for sewer service to support the growth center. Robin commented that to get growth center designation it is not necessary to have the zoning in place, but it is necessary to have sewer and the Planning Commission should do what they can to ensure that the Selectboard puts this issue on the front burner. He further stated that we should have a sewer project plan ready for approval in anticipation of the availability of federal funds for infrastructure.

There was general agreement that the Planning Commission's goal should be to impress on voters the need for a town sewer system. Brian commented that not all the town's citizens were in favor of the development that would be accommodated by having sewer in place. The group agreed that the PC should educate itself about the town's development goals and about what kind of sewer project would best support those goals. It was agreed that John Kiernan, the engineer, and Kate Williams, head of the sewer task force, should be invited to a Planning Commission meeting. Sharon agreed to read the Town Plan and draft a one-page statement summarizing what that document states about the importance of town sewer service in implementing the town's goals.

Flood Hazard and Fluvial Erosion. Sharon explained that the town is required to update the zoning and subdivision regulations to meet NFIP minimum standards, which should be a pretty straightforward process, but the PC can also consider additional standards. The board may want the committee assigned to this project to work simultaneously on developing fluvial erosion districts and standards, depending on the degree to which the SFHA and FEH zones overlap. It was agreed that this work should begin in May or June to be completed by year's end. Sharon recommended involving Friends of the Mad River and the Conservation Commission.

Residential Hamlets. It was agreed that Peter would head this committee. Russ observed that this topic was related to sewer, because hamlets can be considered an alternative to increased growth in downtown areas. Sharon mentioned that the town of Warren provides for creating hamlets through PRD, and suggested that it would make sense to present hamlets and revised Commercial Lodging zoning together.

The board asked Sharon to guesstimate, based on tonight's discussion, how much time these initiatives will require, what the process might involve, and how much time she will have available to work with us.

3. PLANNING COMMISSION'S ROLE IN TOWN PROJECTS

The board discussed whether there should be more input from the Planning Commission to the Selectboard on projects that have a bearing on the town's future, such as repairing the town pond. This led to the suggestion that members of the PC act as liaisons with the other boards. Peter volunteered to be the liaison with the Conservation Commission, Steve will serve in this role with the DRB and Selectboard, and Brian will do the same with Valley Futures. It was agreed that future meeting agendas should begin with a brief update on pertinent activities or ideas of these other boards.

3. NOTIFICATION OF VILLAGE BUSINESS DISTRICT LANDOWNERS. Vickie will send notices this week to landowners in this district concerning the proposed requirement for residential space in larger new construction.

4. BUDGET. The board discussed what should be included in next year's budget. A motion was passed to set the budget for Planning Projects at \$15,000, and to also ask that budget items be added to fund providing wireless service at the town office after office hours and hiring someone to load the minutes, agendas, etc. onto the website.

5. OTHER BUSINESS. Vickie asked if anyone was interested in attending a workshop on amending the Town Plan, offered by VLCT. Peter said he would like to go. Vickie will also plan to attend a workshop on effective zoning enforcement.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to accept as written the minutes for the November 18th and December 2nd meetings.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Vickie Trihy