

WAITSFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 3, 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), Peter Lazorchak, Kari Dolan, Ted Tremper.
A quorum was present.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Russ Bennett, Hadley Gaylord Jr., and Drew Simmons.

STAFF PRESENT: Vickie Trihy.

OTHERS PRESENT: Brandy Saxton, Neil Johnson.

2. DISCUSSION OF TOWN PLAN SURVEY RESULTS. Brandy reported that two hundred thirty-eight responses to the survey were compiled, and ten more responses received subsequently will be reflected in later Town Plan update discussions. She noted that data from a couple of responses did not make it into the printed results—the most up-to-date compilation can be found on her website (placesense.com).

Brandy shared observations about what was notable in the survey responses and answered questions about what useful information can be gleaned from them. Among the items she noted were:

- Everyone wants sidewalks.
- Most want bike lanes.
- 85% want to see the Mad River Path extended and connected.
- There was no support for raising taxes for any purpose, but a number suggested tax incentives for promoting various goals and policies, begging the question: Where would the funding of these incentives come from?
- There was general support for development of wind power.
- Wide concern was evident for protection of natural resources, but not necessarily for doing more to protect them—some respondents weren't sure what the town is currently doing.

Brandy was asked for her analysis of the responses with regard to municipal wastewater. She observed that it would be useful to pull the responses to questions concerning wastewater that appeared in various contexts. For example, it was her impression that most who supported it thought it was needed to facilitate compact growth and housing rather than economic development.

Brandy noticed some distinct differences in the responses of people who completed the survey online compared with those who completed it on paper. She noted that she can provide statistical breakdowns of how people who voted a particular way on one question voted on other related questions, to provide more insight into what can be inferred from the results.

The group decided that in addition to publicizing the results of the survey in the Valley Reporter and the Planning Commission blog, it would be particularly productive to utilize them in the context of forums focusing on specific sections of the Town Plan.

Ted and Steve noted that the survey results seem to support the general direction of the existing Town Plan, rather than indicating a need for major overhaul. Steve observed that opinions in the survey with regard to municipal wastewater seemed to be divided as to whether it was needed, who should pay for it, and what the benefits would be. He thinks the town should respond by examining alternatives to what was proposed and voted down.

Steve commented that the existing Town Plan identifies many tasks. He thinks the board, with public input at forums, should get more specific about what the tasks ahead should be and prioritize them.

Brandy will provide the Planning Commission with a summary of the pertinent results for each Town Plan section as she works her way through them. For the Dec. 1st meeting, the PC members will review the existing Town Plan policy sections and determine what seems out of step with the survey results and may need to be changed. A public meeting will take place in January or February.

3. LIMITED BUSINESS DISTRICT ZONING. Steve stated that the board needs to look at the zoning picture for the whole district and not just the question of whether to allow mixed use and/or residential uses in commercial buildings. He suggested the board set a date for a site visit to familiarize themselves with the area. Tentative dates proposed were Wednesday, Nov. 11th or Friday, Nov. 13th, at 7:30 am.

4. DRAFT ADAPTIVE REDEVELOPMENT OVERLAY DISTRICT (AROD) AMENDMENT. It was suggested that the wording of restrictions on modifications to older structures be changed to apply to buildings built before 1950 rather than buildings over 50 years old. A motion was unanimously approved to submit the draft amendment with the suggested edit, and corrections to two other pages in the bylaws, to the Selectboard.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES. The board approved the minutes of Oct. 6th with corrections, and postponed approving minutes from Oct. 20th because not enough members present at that meeting were here tonight to vote.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.