

Royalton Planning Commission

November 1, 2016

In Attendance:

Beth Wilhite -Chair

Jim Rikert

Nell Gwin

Tim Dreisbach

Stuart Levasseur

Roni Johnson

Mark Wood

David Brandau

Public in attendance:

John Dumville

John Echeverria

Chris Sargent TRORC

Phil Gates RSB

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by Chair Beth Wilhite.

Agenda for this meeting to talk about revisions to the Town Plan. Beth stated that she is not feeling well and has lost her voice so she will refrain from speaking at this meeting and asked Tim Dreisbach to facilitate.

The minutes from October 18th were brought up for discussion, no discussion needed. Tim asked for a motion to accept the minutes Jim Rikert made motion to accept, seconded by David Brandau. The motion carried by unanimous vote with 3 abstaining (Tim, Roni, Mark).

Tim Dreisbach brought up the purpose of the revisions for the town plan for clarification, the tweaks and adjustments are to the language to strengthen the meaning and not intended to be major changes in purpose. The revisions will go before the Selectboard for approval or if deemed appropriate by the Selectboard a vote by the townspeople. The decision to approve or put to a vote will remain with the Selectboard.

Chris Sargent from Two Rivers Ottaquechee Regional Commission spoke on the suggestions for recommended changes. Sargent did not provide specific updates but will submit a document for use in this process. Language such as “should” and “reasonable” are words that are often ignored in the ACT 250 process, this type of language can be strengthened to say “shall” and specific comparisons to give the document teeth. A suggestion for the language in the Resource and Conservation section would be to add requirements for density. Development of a density similar to or greater than that of the village area is not appropriate in these areas. Refer to the units per acre, and decide if multi-family and multi-story residences are to be allowed. The current village density is one unit on ½ acre. Appropriate density for rural areas is 10 acres per unit. PUD-planned unit development may need to be defined if we use that term. The three top factors when talking about development are Scale, Intensity, and Density. Wildlife habitat blocks of greater than 10 acres are necessary to support a healthy wildlife environment.

John Echeverria spoke about wording for the Resource Conservation areas, considering all three Density, Clustering and Maximums (se hard numbers to clearly define what is meant by unacceptable development).

There was a discussion on density relative to town roads, what is the policy on roads within a development. Phil Gates answered by saying as a rule the Town does not take over roads within a development, they remain private. If a class 4 road is upgraded the town MAY take it over but there is no rule stating they must.

Revisions to the plan will focus on two sections, Resource and Conservation, and Agriculture and Residential. The RPC should look at the “shoulds and shalls” in these sections and make sure such changes are appropriate.

Chris Sargent spoke on the State of Vermont's recent Energy Planning policy. Standards for Towns to be Energy Compliant. There will be a meeting on November 10th in Bethel at the Town Hall, 6:30-8:30 to inform people about this new policy.

Jim Rikert asked what benefit the towns gain from having an energy plan, Sargent answered “The town's plan is given more weight”. Assuming the energy developer wants to develop a site in a particular town, if that town has an energy plan the chances are better they will follow the plan. Certain sites are given preference, landfills, old gravel pits. The Energy plan is optional participation. The recommended time frame to have a plan is next fall. The State's plan calls for 90% renewable energy by 2050. Residential contribution can be considered in the town total.

Tim Dreisbach made a point of saying that NewVista has prompted concern among our residents but we want to make sure this is not a NewVista specific solution.

The plan for next meeting is to actually mark up the town plan with the suggested changes.

RPC meeting schedule- reminder the meetings will be at the “regular time” (winter hours) beginning at 6:00 pm

11/15/2016 mark up the plan

12/06/2016 only meeting in December due to Holidays.

A motion to adjourn made by Jim Rikert

seconded by Roni Johnson, meeting adjourned at 8:13 pm

Submitted by recording secretary Stuart Levasseur