

**TOWN OF WESTMINSTER
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
January 12, 2015**

Members Present: John Medeiros (Chair), Chris Vincent, Vice Chair, John Barnett (Clerk), Matt Conklin, Randy Major, Kathy Kingston

Others Present: Russell Hodgkins (Town Manager / Planning & Zoning Administrator), Karen Astley (Recording Clerk)

CALL TO ORDER: Medeiros called this Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:12 PM in the Westminster Town Hall. He noted that a full Board was present. He advised that meetings are tape recorded therefore asked anyone wishing to speak to identify themselves for the record.

ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA: No proposed adjustments. No new information on the Basin Farm.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES: A couple corrections from December 8, 2014 meeting minutes. Page 2, Program for Implementation of the Town Plan (Page 62) AMENDED as proposed by Randy Major to "Monitoring will let residents realize that implementation is occurring and that the Planning Commission will be monitoring progress".

Compatibility with Plans of Adjacent Towns: There was a vote on this item 4-0-0 on December 8, 2015. We did vote on this and it was passed but not noted in minutes. Motion made, voted and approved to insert text prepared by John Barnett presented as Compatibility with Plans of Adjacent Towns.

Kathy Kingston made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. John Barnett seconded. VOTE 6-0-0.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC COMMENT: No public present for communication or comment.

NEW BUSINESS (Discussion / Action):

Act 250 Business, If Any: None.

PSB Business, If Any: Bazin Solar Project, new Project in Westminster Business Park. Zoning Administrator explained this is a second project in same general vicinity of first solar array project. Draft letter John Medeiros wrote to PSB for the wrong solar array project. He will not send but will redraft a new letter of concern to reflect the new proposed project.

Kathy questioned the town will get tax money from this project. There is an ordinance that the town will not tax renewable energy so why can't the Selectboard bring this to the taxpayers to reverse the ordinance? State and legal counsel stated to wait until we bring this to the taxpayers as there are new mandates coming. Tax base is on kilowatts. The Bylaw needs to be rewritten.

John Barnett wants to request the SB reconsider their decision about tabling taxing renewable energy and bring it to the people at the town meeting.

John Medeiros to draft a letter to the PSB explaining the importance of keeping the business for commercial business and not solar array projects when the town at this time cannot tax renewable energy.

Kathy Kingston moved to endorse the letter. Seconded by Chris Vincent. VOTE 5-0-1.

Russ to write a letter to SB and present at next SB meeting.

Randy Major made a motion to recommend to SB that they warn at the town meeting the voters to allow the taxation for commercial renewable energy. Seconded by Kathy Kingston. VOTE 5-1-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS (Discussion / Action):

Town Plan Updates:

Introduction – Who Wrote this Town Plan: Do you want to approve, amend or revise. This section will be in the Town Plan. Need to show and tell people what has been done.

John Barnett made a suggestion that order of Planning Commission members needs to be reorganized by titles. Kathy pointed out a typo in eighth paragraph “heard” should be heard. Change “wishes” to suggestions per Chris Vincent. Tenth paragraph groups add the words “listed below” on...

Indent or add bullets before Commission, boards and committees.

John Medeiros writing an opening paragraph for this section. Town plan was readopted 2012.

John Barnett stated that this section is keeping with other town plans.

John Barnett moved to accept the revisions as amended. Chris Vincent seconded the motion. VOTE 6-0-0.

Projects and Programs Implemented:

This section has changed a lot with less new information than before, but WRC says this needs to be in when they reviewed our plan in 2007. They stated this section was weak. Weak on showing which projects were implemented. John Medeiros presented the revised section. Need to add a paragraph on the Historical Society. We should put the summary as the first paragraph.

ADD: Westminster Historical Society paragraph after town government section.

Matt Conklin asked Cole Streeter for his section and Cole states it is complete. This section can be added at a later time.

Zoning Administrator will get fire department report to PC ASAP.

Chris Vincent moved to accept as submitted. Kathy Kingston seconded the motion. VOTE 6-0-0.

Definition/description of Commercial / Industrial Zone: We have the combined commercial/industrial definition prepared by the Zoning Administrator. This will go into the Bylaw.

John Barnett suggested this definition not go into the town plan. Land Use element has to say something in the town plan about the combined commercial/industrial zones.

Page 58-59 it defines the district the current plan has a commercial and industrial district. We are recommending they be combined. Use the new definition that Russ drafted. Purpose (A.) only.

Starting out “The combined commercial/industrial district is to provide.....

Randy Major made a motion under 442.1 Commercial/Industrial district Paragraph A “Purpose” insert and replace old description into the town plan. Kathy Kingston seconded the motion. VOTE 6-0-0.

Flood Resilience: Kathy finished the new one today. Needs some tweaking. Commission reviewed the two sided, one page, Westminster Town Plan Element on “Flood Resilience”. The additional two pages partially inform with information. If you want to do some thinking on Flood Resilience read through the other two pages.

John Medeiros there is a town hazard mitigation report. The mitigation states what the town will do about flood hazards. Windham Regional is working with the town to update the mitigation plan.

Kathy Kingston page 9 & 10 has local flooding gives history extent..... These are the pieces. Another way flooding is being addressed.

John Medeiros beginning last recommendation number 5 is very good the way it is. I would support adopting it as written.

The next section “Pertaining to Flood Resilience” we should add new policies and recommendations under these sections. Kathy stated we need to be cross referencing these elements in the town plan.

John Medeiros mentioned we could we table this to the next town plan revision year. We can address this as anything critical is included in the text above under flood resilience. The other elements such as forest have a value. It needs to stand out in these elements.

John Medeiros we would have to go back and likely we would have addressed these elements already. With the forestry we have Best Forestry Practices and the state has their own so we are covered.

Kathy Kingston stated recommendations all say “the town”. Should I run this by John Bennett.

Selectboard, DRB and Zoning Administrator are considered “the town”.

John Barnett made a motion to accept Flood Resilience subject to further amendment. Chris Vincent seconded the motion. VOTE 6-0-0.

Compatibility with the Windham Regional Plan: Changed the word coordination to compatibility. This is in packet so Chris and Kathy could see and review. This is considered approved unless Chris or Kathy has something to say.

Appendices: John Medeiros appendices are old. Appendices can be modified any time prior to Selectboard approving.

Westminster Town Plan revisions proposed 2015: Handout

John Medeiros mentioned this was not identified on agenda, but stated this would go with the town plan because it is reorganized. People would not know where to look. It is a cross reference to find changes. It could be printed and put in the town plan. Chris Vincent mentioned we add the public is welcome to attend meetings.....

John Barnett this document could be used at hearings. Very helpful.

PC report for Town Report 2014: John Medeiros document to put in the town report. John asked if everyone is alright with this that it would be put in the town report.

DATE OF NEXT REGULAR MEETING: February 9, 2015 at 7:00 PM

OTHER BUSINESS:

Matt Conklin questioned can the PC investigate a grant writer. The current grant for water/sewer may need a grant writer to assist filling out the grant. The purpose is to provide jobs for those people who lose their jobs and Vermont Yankee. All projects need to be ready for construction. Requires financial documentation from the town.

Russ Hodgkins suggested he would look at the grant and assist with making sure it is in order.

Chris Vincent asked about the proposed quarry on Morse Brook Road.

Russ explained this property would be a proposal to the town to acquire the property to provide aggregate for its own use. We are currently out of product so another Irene will hurt us. This pit will provide crushed gravel, rock of all sizes, rip rap. Fifty three acres with generational savings. It will be a warning article at the town meeting.

Kathy asked if there has been an environmental assessment on this property.

ADJOURNMENT: Kathy Kingston moved to adjourn this meeting. The motion was seconded by Matt Conklin approved by a 6-0-0 vote at 9:10 PM.

Signature of Clerk

Date

Prepared by: Karen M. Astley, Recording Secretary

(**Note:** These are unapproved Minutes. Corrections, if necessary, will be found in the Minutes of the March 9, 2015, Planning Commission meeting.)