

**TOWN OF WESTMINSTER
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
NOVEMBER 9, 2015**

Members Present: John Medeiros (Chair), John Barnett (Clerk), Matt Conklin, Kathy Kingston, Chris Vincent (arrived at 6:40 pm)

Members Absent: Randy Major

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

1. CALL TO ORDER: John Medeiros called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

2. ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA: NONE

3. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES: Section 5; A, third to the last sentence reads “There are not two conflicting facets” should read “There were no convincing argument that we change the proposed zoning in any way”. Section 5; C, Second sentence reads “John Medeiros would like John Barnett to clarify” should read “John Barnett would like John Medeiros to clarify...”. Section 7; second paragraph, fourth sentence reads “The smallest piece of property you can have is 3.7 acres based on our Zoning Bylaws”. Sentence should read “The smallest piece of property you could have was 3.7 acres based on our previous Zoning Bylaws”.

John Barnett made a motion to accept the minutes as corrected above. Matt Conklin seconded the motion. VOTE 5-0-0.

4. COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC COMMENT: No one was present from the public.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS (Discussion / Action):

A): Town Plan Version 6.2: The Select Board adopted the Town Plan Version 6.2 as recommended by the Planning Commission at their October 14, 2015 meeting.

B): ZONING BYLAWS Changes & Revisions ACTICLE II:

John Barnett requested the process to be explained once again. Russ Hodgkins stated that as the Planning Commission goes through the sections those changes would be made by the Zoning Officer. Once they are made the section goes to the DRB for review and comments. If the DRB approves the recommendations there is no further action on the section. If they don't approve they will make comments and resubmit to the Planning Commission through Russ Hodgkins.

Kathy Kingston commented that Article II appeared to be more procedural and other agreed that the DRB should be reviewing and revising this section. It was agreed by all that language such as “bylaw” change to “bylaws” and “regulation” to “bylaws”. It was not necessary to verbalize these changes as they are known.

ARTICLE II ADMINISTRATION & ENFORCEMENT:

Page 3; Section 212 – A; change “this Bylaw” to “these Bylaws”; Section “213” should read Section “214”; line item 2: “approval” should be bold.

Section 212 – B; Add as the last sentence “The owner’s signature must be present on the application”.

Section 212-C; Add line item 2 to read “Energy Certificate”

Page 4; Section 212-E; Capitalize “e911” to read “E911”.

Section 213-G: Kathy Kingston questioned why there is no mention to “wetlands” although a state permit maybe required. Russ Hodgkins didn't feel that it was needed as these bylaws pertain to “town” not state. Applicants are told they should call the state as there may be state permits required.

Section 213-A: Should read “ Modifications of building interiors up to \$10,000.00 if no change of use is proposed.

Section 213-E: Should read “A doghouse, playhouse, tree house, pools, shed or similar structure.....

Section 213- F: Should read “Temporary uses and structures as per Section 530 of this Bylaw, 30 day maximum.”

Section 213-G: Should read “Filing of Land; Filling of land “subject to any necessary state approvals,”.

Section 213-H: Russ and Karen to rewrite and resubmit to the Planning Commission. This section has to have teeth.

Page 5; Section 213-H; Item 1: question was “Secretary” of what? Should read “Secretary of Agriculture”.

Section 213; ADD ITEM I to read “Home Occupation applicants(GET FROM RUSS).

Section 214 – A: change regulations to “bylaws”.

Section 214 – B; item 1; line item h: Change “electronic” to “hard” and should read copies of plans are required. If hand drawn, plans are preferred on graph paper.

Section 214 requires consequence reinforcement whether fines are doubled, lien on property. Should this be up front in A?

Page 7; Section D renumber paragraphs 2, 3, 4. In section Administrative Officer Approvals start new paragraph at “Within 30 days of receipt...”and becomes number 1 in Section D.

Page 8; Line item 3; Authority; “e”: take out the number 1 and make this part of the e (one paragraph).

Line item “f” should read Section 616.2

Line item “g” should read Section 616.1A

Russ mentioned fines and violations need to be outlined clearly as well as home occupations.

Page 10; line item “f” add minor and major

Line item “g” delete

Line item “k, l, m, n, o and p” add Application(s) within.....

Line item 5; first sentence should read (Section 314) and (Sections 216 & 313)

Page 12; line item “f”; fourth line down; should read “the transcripts of testimony they have missed, site visits.....

Line item 2; add “Board” after Historic Review

Page 13; Section 216; add number “4” to read “Reasons for Denial”

Page 14; Section 217 eliminate the letter “A” and add “the” in the third line down to read “decision, to the Vermont Environmental Court in accordance with “the” Act,.....

Paragraph 1 should be “A” and paragraph 2 will be “B”

Section 218; Section A will require teeth. It is important to be clear and concise as misinterpretation can occur.

Russ Hodgkins commented that fines have determined in this section and outlined.

6. NEW BUSINESS (Discussion / Action):

A): Act 250 Business, If Any: Windham County Sheriff’s Multi-Purpose Center was discussed as a “For Your Information” and a heads up. The State of Vermont issued a Project Review Sheet. Russ Hodgkins spoke about the project as he is part of the planning team for this project. Russ stated it is early in the proposed project. This is a 23 million dollar project which needs funding and approvals. Issues discussed at the meeting were parking, and building integrity. The building won’t look like a prison but it will house inmates on furlough. It will also be a holding area but no long term incarceration will be done at this facility. There are many hills to climb before this project comes to life. Westminster just has a small piece of property associated with this project which is the driveway. It doesn’t appear that Westminster will generate much tax revenue with this project.

B): PSB Business, If Any: None for this meeting.

7. OTHER BUSINESS: Conservation Commission has requested that they be a sub-committee or at least meet with the Planning Commission periodically. They are struggling to get active volunteers for the committee. John Medeiros will contact Stephen Major. Question was raised who monitors the wildlife corridors. The Conservation Commission along with the assistance of the Planning Commission would need to get volunteers to conduct this study. There may be other ways the Planning Commission could assist but would need to hear from the Conservation Commission to get a better assessment.

Town Forest: Russ Hodgkins mentioned that Tim Morton, State Forester, will hire a company to cut and thin out the town forest. Once this has been completed it will be another 10-15 years. The cutting will be outside the perimeter of the walking trails. Chris Vincent recommended that this work be done with draft horses as it will be less destructive to the forest and the environment. Russ explained the process that all brush will be chipped and left. Kathy Kingston stated there have been studies showing that chipping is not the best practice. John Medeiros asked if there would be water bars across the roads so erosion does not occur from heavy rains. Russ Hodgkins continued to explain roads will be graded and reseeded using methods so there is no erosion.

Agenda for next meeting will be to focus on Article III of the Zoning Bylaws.

8. DATE OF NEXT REGULAR MEETING: December 14, 2015 at 6:30 P.M.

9. ADJOURNMENT: John Barnett made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:44 pm. The motion was seconded by Kathy Kingston and accepted with a 5-0-0 vote.

Signature of Clerk

Date

Prepared by: Karen Astley, Recording Clerk