

**TOWN OF WESTMINSTER
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
DECEMBER 14, 2015**

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

Members Absent: Randy Major

Others Present: Russell Hodgkins (Town Manager / Planning & Zoning Administrator)

1. CALL TO ORDER: John Medeiros called the meeting to order at 6:42 p.m.

2. ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA: NONE

3. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES: One adjustment was made on page 2 at the very bottom of the page. “to be” was added to the sentence. It should to read as follows: Russ Hodgkins commented that fines have “to be” determined in this section and outlined.

John Barnett made a motion to accept the minutes as corrected above. Kathy Kingston seconded the motion. VOTE PASSED 5-0-0.

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

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS (Discussion / Action):

A): Discussion of proposed Bylaw revisions, Article II: Administration and Enforcement;

The Development Review Board (DRB) has Article II for their comments and the Zoning Administrator stated that the DRB had no concerns or comments on Article I.

B): ZONING BYLAWS Changes & Revisions ACTICLE III: Development Review;

Minor changes were made to the content of the Article, mostly grammar, but discussion continued in that when the new Bylaws are complete “they need to be able to be understood by all who read them”. Clarification and simplicity are the keys.

6. NEW BUSINESS (Discussion / Action):

A): Act 250 Business, If Any: No new information was available.

B): PSB Business, If Any: The Zoning Administrator explained briefly the meeting in Brattleboro that he attended two weeks ago concerning the Public Service Board (PSB). He stated that the PSB received comments only at this meeting which was to cover the Boards service to Towns and the State. No questions were answered and every person present was given 8 minutes to speak to the question of why the PSB does what it does. “The whole process was very disturbing and frustrating”, he told the Planning Commission.

C): PC Report for Town Report 2016: John Medeiros shared his first draft of the report to submit for the Town Report. John Barnett was concerned that about half of the draft was directed to “animal corridors”. He stated that the Commission did whole lot more than just that and probably should add more contents to the draft in some way stating this fact. Discussion took place in which flood resiliency, renewable energy, and the Town Plan were all mentioned as items that could be added because they were items that a lot of time was spent enhancing them for the new Town Plan adopted this year.

7. OTHER BUSINESS:

A.) Kathy Kingston stated that she wrote an email to all of the PC members stating her views on “Chipping Slash vs. Leaving Slash” in the Town Forest if harvesting timber is going to happen. She researched this topic and overwhelming evidence supported her view that leaving the tops of the trees on the forest bottom has great advantages to animal habitat, forest floor health, and overall forest management best practices. She will forward this information to the Conservation Commission. She also recognizes that this practice is not as pretty to look at, but feels this practice is very important.

B.) Also stated by the ZA under other business was the fact that the next Article for discussion and correction was Article IV and this Article has 11 pages so he asked the PC to give it appropriate amount of time prior to the next meeting.

8. DATE OF NEXT REGULAR MEETING: January 11, 2016 at 6:30 P.M.

9. ADJOURNMENT: Kathy Kingston made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 pm. The motion was seconded by Chris Vincent and accepted with a 5-0-0 vote.

Signature of Clerk

Date

Prepared by: Russell R. Hodgkins - ZA