

ORIGINAL

TOWN OF WESTMINSTER
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
FEBRUARY 10, 2014

Members Present: John Medeiros (Chair); John Barnett (Chair); Matt Conklin, Randy Major, Kathy Kingston

Members Absent: Chris Vincent

Others Present: Russ Hodgkins (TM); Bill Jewell (ZA)

CALL TO ORDER: Medeiros called this Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:40 PM in the Westminster Town Hall. He noted that all members were present except for Vincent. Medeiros advised that meetings are tape recorded therefore asked anyone wishing to speak to identify themselves.

CONNECTICUT RIVER JOINT COMMISSION: Jewell distributed CDs that explain what the CRJC plans are as the PC members should know about them. The Town has a pre-application for a solar array near the Connecticut River.

ENERGY CODES: Medeiros received a notice from the Windham Regional Commission that they will be holding a "Municipal Requirements and Opportunities for Vermont Energy Code and Above-Code Programs" Workshop on March 20th, 2014, from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm at the Townshend Town Hall. He will email copies of the notice to the members. Jewell advised that the State is now making the Zoning Administrators hand out compliant sheets with the permit application so after the construction is completed the applicant has to fill out the forms stating that they are in compliance with the State Energy Code either for a residence or a business.

AMEND/APPROVE MINUTES FROM JANUARY 13, AND 27, 2014: In the January 13th Minutes, under Status/Progress on Town Plan Update it was clarified that the motion made by Major should read "That the PC report in the Town report includes the mention of the subdivision regulations being in the new By-laws." On page 3, under Other Business – Transfer Station – change "Tow out of waste options entirely" to "Town out of waste options entirely". Change "Waste Management now until January 1, 2015" to "Current waste management complies until January 1, 2015". The members added that "The Town needs to decide on an option in 2014".

Medeiros / Kingston moved to approve the Minutes of the January 13, 2014, meeting as amended above. With all members in favor, the Minutes were approved by a 5-0-0 vote (approved, abstained, opposed).

There was a consensus to postpone taking action on the January 27, 2014, meeting Minutes until the next regular meeting. Medeiros will review and expand.

NEW BUSINESS:

Pre-Application Letter Re: Putney Solar Project Near Route 5, Westminster: Medeiros called the person who wrote the letter to the PC to ask him to be clearer on the location. Hopefully, they will respond. Kingston felt a good map was needed and would like to know if the panels are only on the acreage where the top soil was removed. There was a consensus to have Jewell contact Mr. Shullenberger to request a precise location. Jewell noted that the PC has some time to respond on this. On Public Service Board applications only the Selectboard and the PC have the right to make comments. Jewell will obtain the information that the PC asks for, present it to them, the PC members will make a decision and then write a letter that will be sent to the PSB. Jewell said there is legislation that gives PC opinions greater weight than neighbors' opinions. Kingston asked why this will help the Town of Putney

to reduce their electric bill. Jewell said they are putting money into the project so they will get a portion of the voltage. Hodgkins advised that Westminster has the same opportunity to invest in the project. The Selectboard is doing research on it.

Savoy – Act 250 Land Use Permit: Jewell pointed out that this went before the Development Review Board (DRB) twice and Eric Savoy and Phil Savoy were given permits. The DRB had an alternate member fill in for Phil Savoy. Jewell provided the history on the project. The neighbors appealed this to the Environmental Court and requested a Jurisdictional Opinion from the local Act 250 in Springfield. Act 250 in Springfield agreed by stating that Savoy needed an Act 250 permit because it is more than ten acres. They have not yet set a date. PC members acknowledged receipt of this Act 250 application.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Town Plan Update – From Page 36 (Agriculture): Following are the corrections / changes made to Town Plan Draft No. 4 at this meeting:

Page 37:

- 4th line – change “one” to “two” of the largest;
- 3rd paragraph, 4th line – change “lies” to “lie”;
- 4th paragraph, 2nd line – change “important” to “critical”;
- 4th and 5th paragraphs – should be combined as one paragraph;

Page 38:

- #2 - Agriculture Recommendations – “Resources” should be “resources”
- #2 – Agriculture Recommendations – “Vitality” should be “vitality”;
- #3, 2nd line – change “will” to “shall”;
- #8 – change “Acceptable” to “Best”;
- Forest Lands, 2nd line – Use “400+/-“ acres in the blank space;
- Forest Lands, 3rd line – after Westminster, – add “the Bellows Falls Union High School Forest 150+/- acres”
- Forest Lands, 4th line – change “Windmill Ridge Nature Reserve and Trail and Bald Mountain” to “Windmill Hill and Bald Hill Nature Reserves”.

Page 39:

- Recreation: 4th paragraph, 2nd line – after town, - add “the Bellows Falls Union High School Forest,”;
- 1st paragraph, 3rd line - Predominant tree species – Kingston will re-organize the species.
- 1st paragraph, 6th line, after categories – add “hereafter described”;
- 1st paragraph, 6th line – start a new paragraph with “Sustainable uses”;
- 2nd paragraph, Forest based industries – add “.” after this; delete “are vital to Westminster” – start paragraph with “Protecting” and after *character* end with “are vital to Westminster”
- 2nd paragraph, 2nd line – change “occur” to “occurs”;
- Kingston will look into adding a paragraph on the challenges of global warming to be put in after the four categories.
- 4th paragraph, Recreation, 3rd line – change Logging “trails” to “roads,” - add “farm trails” - change “Ancient Roads” to “Town Rights-of-Way”
- Forest Lands Policies - #2 – change “which” to “that”.

Page 40:

- Forest Lands Recommendations - #1 – change “conservation commission” to “Conservation Commission” and change “to pursue working” to “to work” in conjunction.
- #5 – 2nd line - change “Ridge Nature Reserve and Trail” to “Hill Pinnacle Association”
- #5 – 3rd line – add on the end “, and on-going trail maintenance”

FILED April 16, 2014
WESTMINSTER VT
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
ATTEST: Patty Merkasi
TOWN CLERK