

**TOWN OF WESTMINSTER  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
February 17, 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)

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Medeiros called this Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:02 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.

**2. ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA:** No proposed adjustments. John Medeiros would like to take five to ten minutes to develop an agenda for the next meeting. Will do this at the end of the meeting.

**3. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:** Minor revisions to minutes from January 12, 2015. Page two changed word from to allow the taxation for commercial renewable energy.

Page 2, paragraph 7: Under Projects and Programs Implemented: Changed the first sentence per our notes. "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" relative to draft 5.

Page 2: 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 "Combined commercial and industrial district is to provide a centralized and accessible location for employment opportunities in manufacturing, warehousing, commercial, and light industrial development. Combining these Districts enhances our Development Growth Centers without limiting business opportunities and needs of the Town. This District will encourage orderly growth, judicious placement of parking and avoid potential conflict in land use.

Page 1; Paragraph 6: State and legal counsel stated "wait to bring" this to the taxpayers.....

Page 1; Paragraph 8: Changed the word "business" to "parcels" in paragraph John Medeiros to draft letter...

Page 3; Paragraph 2: Kathy Kingston stated that pages 9 & 10 of the current working draft 5 have local flooding history.

**John Barnett made a motion to accept the minutes as revised. Chris Vincent seconded.**

**VOTE 6-0-0.**

After minutes for January 12, 2015 were approved another change was made on Page 4; Paragraph 1: Last sentence to read "It will be a "warned" article at the town meeting." No motion was made to approve and the committee moved on.

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

**5. NEW BUSINESS (Discussion / Action):**

**a.) Act 250 Business, If Any:** No new business.

**b.) PSB Business, If Any:** John Medeiros wrote and read a letter for the PSB regarding Renewable Generation dated January 13, 2015 solar array project in the industrial park. The letter stressed the importance of keeping the land for commercial business and not solar array projects when the town. Question was asked if the letter should be sent and Russ said yes sign it and send it.

**c.) Discussion Conduct of PC Meetings:** Chris Vincent spoke about keeping the meetings moving forward by allowing members to speak one at a time. The commission tends to stray with side conversations and not stay focused on the agenda. When a person has the floor there are side conversations occurring. Chris and Kathy both expressed interest in facilitating. Facilitator should recognize members when someone wants to speak. Should agenda items have allotted time limits? Note takers should be part of the conversation and have the ability to stop the meeting to get clarification. Do we run the meeting by Robert Rules of Order? Some members feel this is too rigid but commission can implement some rules in order to maintain order, time constraints and agenda topics.

## **6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS (Discussion / Action):**

All changes are in Draft #6 per Russ. Page 23 on bottom needs to go in the town plan move section to the front of the town plan. The following sections were not in Draft 6 as intended: Flood Resilience, Who Wrote this Plan, Projects and Programs Implemented, Compatibility with Plans of Adjacent Towns, and Appendices. These sections need to be added.

### **6 (a): Agenda Item 6 (a) Projects and Programs Implemented:**

Section: “Westminster Historical Society” to be after Town Government.

**6 (b):** The guide (supplement) “Summary of Significant Changes” seems to be confusing the commission. What is its purpose of this document in relation to the town plan? As John Medeiros has stated the supplement is a guide for the public to be redirected to the new town plan for changes. The guide is not going into the town plan but will be used as a supplement for public hearings and general public assistance.

“Summary of Significant Changes” and “Westminster Town Plan revisions proposed revisions 2015” appear to be similar. There needs to be some sort of distinction from the two. Westminster Town Plan revisions will be a good resource for the public, attorneys and the Select Board.

Make a change to Westminster Town Plan revisions proposed 2015 paragraph one by moving sentence that begins “The reorganization of the sections or elements was recommended by the Windham Regional Commission.....to be the first introductory sentence in the paragraph.

Discussion on adoption of the Town Plan by the Planning Commission: Town Plan can change during and after the public hearings. Commission does not need to adopt all suggestions to change sections or items that are drafted. PC will approve, vote and adopt a final version of the “proposed” Town Plan once all comments and hearings are concluded. Up until this point the PC has only been adopting sections or elements.

**6(c):** Appendices were tabled to the next meeting but will be included in the next draft of the plan.

**6(d):** Remapping of district zones will be coordinated by Russ with Jeff Nugent at Windham Regional Commission. Zones will include combining the new Commercial/Industrial zone and Carol Bazin parcel on Route 5 moving district line from Village to Residential.

**6(e):** Commission is not ready to set any dates for Proposed Town Plan public hearings. Possibility of late May is earliest that any hearings will take place. Question was raised “what is the format to start the adoption process for the Town Plan. Windham Regional Commission; Town Counsel; and the Select Board will review the “proposed” plan. Once this is completed Public Hearings will be warned within 30 days of the first meeting. There could be up to three hearings. No jurisdictional meetings are required.

**7. OTHER BUSINESS:**

a.) Discussion item Town Quarry: Concerns with the quarry such as cost of doing an Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) and Act 250. Land values will go down around the quarry. Blasting, traffic, fossil fuel, noise from the crushing, percussion/vibration of blasting will this impact wildlife. Advantages to the quarry will save the town money, will have resources to rebuild roads. Still more research to be conducted to have enough facts but it would be nice to have the Planning Commissions blessing for this project if it moves forward from town meeting.

b.) Noise Ordinance: Discharging of firearms is there an ordinance? If not PC should look at this as a safety and noise concern as it is disruptive when there is no apparent reason for discharging firearms especially out of season.

c.) Build Agenda for Next Meeting: Town Plan, Town Quarry, Siting of Solar Arrays, Noise Ordinance specific to discharging of fire arms.

**8. DATE OF NEXT REGULAR MEETING:** March 9, 2015 at 7:00 PM

**9. ADJOURNMENT:** John Medeiros moved to adjourn this meeting at 8:52 pm. The motion was seconded by Kathy Kingston approved by a 6-0-0 vote.

\_\_\_\_\_  
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 April 13, 2015, Planning Commission meeting.)