

**TOWN OF WESTMINSTER
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
March 9, 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: Russ Hodgkins, Town Manager / Planning & Zoning Administrator called this Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:03 PM in the Westminster Town Hall. Chris Vincent came in at 7:12 pm, a full board was present at this time.

2. REORGANIZATION OF OFFICERS:

Russ started the meeting by requesting nominees of a chairman for the commission.

Kathy Kingston made a motion to appoint John Medeiros as Chair of Planning Commission. Randy Major 2nd the motion. VOTE 4-0-1 approved.

John Medeiros took over the meeting as Chairman of the Planning Commission.

Vice President nominees were requested. Chris Vincent Vice Chairman but was not present to accept nomination.

John Barnett made a motion to appoint Chris as Vice Chairman, motion was 2nd by Matt Conklin. VOTE 5-0-0, approved.

Nominees for Clerk were requested. John Barnett was nominated to serve as Clerk. John accepted the nomination.

Kathy Kingston made a motion to appoint John Barnett as Clerk. Randy Major 2nd the motion. VOTE 5-0-0.

3. ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA: No proposed adjustments.

4. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES: Two revisions to minutes from February 17, 2015.

Page two, paragraph 1, second sentence, change word “when” to “in” the town.

Page 2, last paragraph, section 6(d): last sentence in paragraph should read “on Route 5 moving district line from Residential to Village”.

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

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

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS (Discussion / Action):

6 (a): Draft #6 March 2015 Everything is in as of 3/9/2015 per the commission. There still may be some edits. Possible vote on the Town Plan in April 2015.

Page 5; asterisks need to be slid to the left to be flush; Solid Waste should read WSWMD Representative Jan Ameen.

Second to the last sentence from bottom of page 5, last paragraph. Change January 2015 to March 2015. Omit John Medeiros name.

Page 6: Fire Prevention & Fire District Services: Needs an introduction or paragraph and go into the list. Russ to rewrite this section. Provide public services..... John Medeiros had a small introduction (need to get to Russ).

Page 9; Mission statement should go in the front of the town plan. Move to page 4 after the first paragraph. (Before the Who Wrote This Plan).

Page 10; Community Profile has a lot of good information and some that should be taken out. This section should have some sort of order by chronology.

John Barnett doesn't agree that community profile has to be in chronological order. He wants to see a revised draft of this section. Russ and John Barnett will dialogue together on this. Russ to revise and email to John Barnett prior to making any changes to draft 6, March 2015.

Page 12; Combine the two orphaned sentences together to form one paragraph. This will now become the seventh paragraph on this page.

Page 13; Extensive discussion on this section. 1999 is this history? Paragraph seven should start this section. Where does history stop in the Town Plan relative to significant or major businesses in town. There are businesses that are not listed in this section. There are several businesses missing that have made names for themselves. History is generalized and some names are mentioned. They were major employers at the time. Fall into another realm. List business by type not name.

The town has 20th century businesses, Harlow Farms, High Meadow Farm, Crocker, Frazier Cooper Ellis, Dixon, sugar producers, alpaca & goat farms, organic farms that are not listed. The Goodell Farm was talked about and how dairy played an important agricultural role for the town. Agricultural is critical. Cottage Industries were created because of I91 access project that are not mentioned.

Once we start naming businesses we have an obligation to name them all. It may be wise to talk about types of businesses. Panel will add the missing businesses and send them to Russ.

We should write Westminster expanded its "economic resources" buildings, trucks, agricultural, technological, etc. significantly in the 20th century. This should be in the history. WRC wants to see this. Commission doesn't want to get heat for favoring one over another or leaving one out.

Commission agreed we either name all of the businesses or call out businesses by type of business or category. Each member of the commission was going to email Russ with additional business names after reviewing Draft #6 in its entirety.

John Barnett commented we should do a narrative on the precipitous decline in the dairy industry and then go into the other businesses. Goodell Farm with 2500 head of cows; Bazin Brothers Farm.

Solution: Each member should send an email four or five major businesses to Russ to include what they think should be in this section, or we paraphrase this section in the community profile and have the businesses listed in the Appendix.

Page 14; first paragraph, 4th line down, remove "and".

Page 15; first paragraph, first sentence: Change length to “duration” and add “approximately” after is.

Page 17; Planning Elements & Utility and Facility Plan. Not consistent with the format of the town plan. Utility and Facility Plan is an Element and heading (Match the font and don't underline). Delete Planning Elements altogether.

Page 38; Underline Town Halls, Libraries, Churches, and Cemeteries.

Page 46; Commercial/Industrial District (COM/IND) Typo “combing” should be combining. Question what do you remember about the district for the commercial/industrial district. Is all the industrial going into one district? Route 123 corridor is now industrial. Was Route 123 going to be part of the “commercial/industrial growth center”? Members did say yes it will be part of the commercial/industrial growth center district. There will be no segregation. Development Growth Centers in the same paragraph will remain plural which is critical language that we need in the town plan for grant opportunity.

Page 50; Whole paragraph has to come out.

Page 51; Appendix B Inventory of Businesses: There are major businesses that are not listed in the appendix.

Page 52; Durand Automotive Group is in twice. Delete the first line and delete Toyota, Ford cars and add new and used cars. Russ to abbreviate a little bit.

Hidden Springs Maple is on Bemis Hill Road not US Route 5; “VT” Shepherd Cheese, Patch Farm Road. Alpaca Farms to be added. One on Piggery Road and the other on Pine Banks Road.

Add Congregational Church of Westminster West to be added to Associations/Non-Profits.

Page 53; Bazin Brothers, and Hodgkins and Sons were not in draft 5. Russ brought this to the commission's attention.

Page 56; Passenger Car Leasing has all the trucking companies and Golden Cross Ambulance. Golden Cross Ambulance to be moved to professional services. Russ will change this title.

8:15 pm Kathy stated we stop at this time and move back onto the agenda.

6(b): Land Use Map Status: Russ passed out the map of the zoning district. Discussion regarding moving a zoning district line from residential to village (Bazin parcel on Route 5). Is this considered spot zoning and is this illegal in the State of Vermont? If we do this for one resident we will be setting a precedent for others to follow whether it is a formal or informal request. The commission is not creating a new zone but just expanding one. Commission will be asked why are you moving this district line?

Two houses on the farm property. They are trying to split the farm land from the homes so the residents can file for homestead exemption status. Farm will evidently become a Planned Unit Development.

Commission is not creating a new zone but expanding an existing one.

Russ to contact legal counsel and ask if moving a zoning district line can be done what is the process, if it can be done.

6(c): Town Stone Quarry Status: Questions were raised at town meeting such as assessed value verses price to purchase property, can we negotiate terms with owner, paving Morse Brook, cost to build road, state permitting costs, interesting proposal but not enough information to vote on article. There is no such thing as testing material in the Town of Westminster per Russ. Any commercial company will be

stipulated to pave Morse Brook Road. Reclamation plan in Walpole NH two years cost 15,000.00; Act 250 for municipalities is exempt as well as stormwater permitting fees; legal fees Russ had no estimate; build road the town could have done it free by the road crew, land is already surveyed.

Russ stated the town will not be perusing this property. Town tabled article indefinitely by floor vote. The owner is moving on to the next interested buyer.

7. NEW BUSINESS (Discussion / Action):

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

b.) PSB Business, If Any: Letters written by Planning Commission and Select Board to PSB regarding Renewable Generation solar project were mailed.

c.) Siting of solar array projects: Is the State going to be looking into these projects. For the public good it is not necessarily good for the residents. Need to ask John Bennett. To be tabled to the April agenda.

d.) Ordinance regarding noise and safety relative to shooting guns: What is the town's role in setting standards with shooting guns? What are the state regulations? The Planning Commission recommends ordinances or bylaws to the Select Board. There is no bylaw or ordinance in Westminster regarding guns. When the Planning Commission starts reviewing bylaws this topic will be brought to the table.

e.) Grant Writer: Planning Commission would like to identify someone to write the Vermont Yankee Grant for the feasibility study for water/sewer extension line. Bigger towns will hire someone to write grants for the town. PC would like recommend to the Select Board to hire a grant writer. Russ stepped up and said he would write the grant. John Medeiros and Matt Conklin to get Russ the information.

8. OTHER BUSINESS:

John Medeiros made a motion that all the members review Draft 6 completely. Kathy Kingston 2nd the motion.

a.) Build Agenda for Next Meeting: Siting of Solar Array Projects.

9. DATE OF NEXT REGULAR MEETING: April 13, 2015 at 7:00 PM

10. ADJOURNMENT: John Medeiros moved to adjourn meeting at 8:59 pm. The motion was seconded by Matt Conklin 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 May 11, 2015, Planning Commission meeting).