

**TOWN OF WESTMINSTER
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MAY 12, 2014**

Members Present: John Medeiros (Chair); Chris Vincent (Vice-Chair); John Barnett (Clerk); Matt Conklin, Randy Major, (Kathy Kingston – late)

Others Present: Russ Hodgkins (Town Manager); William Jewell (Zoning Administrator)

CALL TO ORDER: Medeiros called this Planning Commission to order at 7:00 PM in the Westminster Town Hall. He noted that all members were present except for Kathy Kingston who will be late. He advised that meetings are tape recorded therefore asked anyone wishing to speak to identify themselves.

ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA: There were no adjustments to the Agenda.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES – April 14, 2014: Barnett / Major moved to approve the Minutes of the April 14, 2014, meeting, as submitted. With all members in favor, the Minutes were approved by a 5-0-0 vote (approved, abstained, opposed) vote.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC COMMENT:

Spring Planning and Zoning Meeting: Barnett received a copy of this notice and is interested in attending the meeting on June 4th, 2014, at Lake Morey. Conklin would also like to attend. Jewell reported that the Legislative Session recently made changes so they should hear about them. Hodgkins will sign them up.

NEW BUSINESS (Discussion / Action):

Act 250 Business - State of Vermont Public Safety Building:

Medeiros pointed out that the Act 250 application is about 120 pages long. Jewell advised that the Public Safety Building will be located on the Westminster Heights Road near Green Mountain Power Corp. One question the Town has is the access point. It seems close to GMP. Hodgkins explained that this building will house three different branches: Fish and Game, State Police and Emergency Management. The building is shaped like an "H". It is on a 5.5 acre lot. Jewell pointed out that with the storm water treatment and leach field it takes up pretty much all the parcel; there will be two parking areas and a communications tower. Barnett asked if the State pays the Town anything in lieu of taxes. Hodgkins was not sure but assumes so. It will help with overseeing the Park 'N Ride area. It will be a good asset. He is concerned with water as that whole parking area will go into a filtration basin; once they get a heavy rain it will go into the sediment pond where it will not be treated fast enough for the out-fall that will then go onto the Town land they just acquired. A normal ^{RAIN} ~~rain~~ will be okay. Jewell noted about two acres will be covered with pervious paving. The members discussed impervious vs pervious paving as well as concrete and the maintenance of all three. Medeiros suggested the PC recommend to Act 250 that the PC strongly supports this project but they wish to add that the project design does not address the storm water management with reference to the over-flow during a heavy rain storm onto Town property and refer to that section in the Town Plan. He volunteered to draft the letter. If Medeiros will send this letter to Hodgkins, he will look it over and pass it onto the other PC members. RRH

Public Service Board Business, If Any:

Agency of Natural Resources / Office of Planning and Legal Affairs: Jewell advised that the PC received an email saying the ANR cannot do their review on the Dukeshire project in 21 days so they want an extension. They talked to the Westminster counsel and Westminster agreed. They are looking at the consequences of having the solar panels there. The PC does not need to do anything at this time. The neighbors on the east side of Route 5 are all saying "stop" and they are dealing directly with the PSB.

Unfinished Business (Discussion / Action):

Status of Zoning Bylaw Update Process (Newly Adopted Interim Copies To Be Available):

Hodgkins advised that the Zoning Bylaw Update was adopted by the Select Board and is now available and in use.

Town Plan Update Continues, PC Needs to Include Economic Development Content and Flood Resilience Content (Page 47): *Kingston came into the meeting.*

Energy Resources Analysis:

Hydro - 4th Paragraph - Jewell reported that FERC now allows 10 mega watts or less without a review; their only requirement is that they be notified. You need 5 mega watts to run a house. After “very little flow” put a period. Then add the new sentence.

Policies:

Major suggested dropping the word “To” on Nos. 1 and 4. Barnett noted that to be consistent it should be kept in there; the majority agreed to keep “To” in.

Page 48 – No. 6: Jewell pointed out that there are two levels of net metering: 1) it is for the house; and 2) because you are making a profit off selling the electricity. They need to be thinking about how the infrastructure is going to handle making electricity in a lot of different locations; before it used to be one location sent out to everywhere else. What kind of safeguards should they be thinking about? They need to think about the whole system and how it affects Westminster. The Town should be getting some taxes from it which is not currently the case. Hodgkins pointed out that in 1983 the Town voted not to tax any alternative energy. The Selectboard is now looking at changing that.

Change #6 - “To promote Residential connection of alternative energy systems to the electric power grid under “net-metering”. Eliminate “shall not be considered a commercial use”.

New Number 7: “To encourage local taxation of commercial energy generation”.

New Number 8: Change to: “To ensure that future energy infrastructure falls within (or as closely as possible) to existing rights-of-way or corridors.”

New Number 9: Add: “The Town will accept or adopt innovative energy technologies cautiously, with all due regard for the public health and safety, both as to power production and power transmission or transport of chemicals.”

Change #8 to #10: “Control the flow of recyclables into the solid waste stream.”

Add to #4: “For example: To encourage Planned Unit Development (PUDs) on small lots in the Villages.”

Recommendations:

Page 48 –

Medeiros made a general recommendation that the Town should actively look for funding to maintain bicycle / foot paths. The Town cannot continue to pay for this through property taxes.

Page 49 – Following a lengthy discussion about new energy technology and/or transport of chemicals, the members agreed to add this as Number 14 at the end of Recommendations:

“To encourage the Town to re-establish an Energy Committee to help keep the Town informed of all significant energy issues and to communicate effectively with the Town’s people.”

Kingston believes we have a lot of Recommendations so when they start doing Implementations it will be lengthy. Medeiros mentioned that Jewell said in the Dummerston Town Plan after each Policy they put in

parenthesis whether it is the Selectboard, Planning Commission, etc. It is just put into the text. That is a really good way to address Implementations if it is acceptable with the Windham Regional Commission.

Page 50:

Under Housing, Major wondered why we used data from 2000 for the Household Size. Barnett is not sure if the 2010 data is available. Jewell said the Department of Health keeps these figures on a five-year basis. Barnett will check on this for the next meeting.

Kingston questioned that under the new energy code for buildings, should that be included in the Recommendations. Jewell explained that they already have to do that when issuing a Building Permit.

At the next meeting the PC members will start on Page 50 - Housing.

OTHER BUSINESS:

NEW DRB MEMBER: Hodgkins reported that there are two people interested in being appointed to the DRB and PC Boards. Eric Anderson has volunteered to join the DRB.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: The PC members entered into an Executive Session to discuss a Candidate for Planning Commission at 9:08 PM.

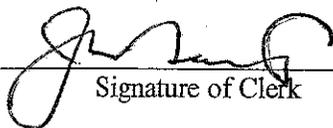
The regular meeting resumed at 9:14 PM.

NEW PC MEMBER: Medeiros announced that Christian Blake has expressed an interest in being on the Planning Commission. The PC members had a discussion during the Executive Session.

Barnett / Major moved that the PC members decline to recommend that Christian Blake be appointed as a member of the PC. With all members in favor, the motion was approved by a 6-0-0 vote.

ADJOURNMENT:

Major / Conklin moved to adjourn this meeting. With all members in favor, the motion was approved at 9:18 PM.



Signature of Clerk

June 9, 2014
Date

Prepared by: Regina Borden, Recording Secretary

(Note: These are unapproved Minutes. Corrections, if necessary, will be found in the Minutes of the June 09, 2014, Planning Commission meeting.)

