

FINAL
TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT
MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Monday, 8 July, 2019

I. Call to Order - Vice-Chair, Paul Tillman called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.
Planning Commission: Howard Beach, Sven Fedorow (Land Use Administrator), Tyler Harwell, Paul Tillman, Michael Todd, Julia Lloyd Wright (Energy Coordinator, ex-officio)
Visitors: Nikita Lenahan, Fred Kowalik, Geoff Wiswell, Beech Hill Forestry, Reading, VT

III. Agenda Review - 8 July, 2019

IV. Comments from Citizens

Fred Kowalik, an abutting neighbor to the proposed transfer station town solar array, said he would support having one-half mile distance between solar installations. Bennington is supporting a distance of one-half mile and there was discussion as to whether the Public Utility Commission (PUC) would defer to such a standard. Michael Todd suggested adding a paragraph lead-in to the Town Plan regarding the distance between solar installations.

Nikita Lenahan produced photographs of two black bears close to her residence which abuts the Town Transfer Station. Sven Fedorow accepted the photographs and will include them in the file for the proposed Town solar array.

Visitor Geoff Wiswell from Reading, VT owner of Beech Hill Vegetation forestry mulching and timbering cleanup made a presentation to the commission regarding bulldozing and brush-hogging the future site for the solar array at the town transfer station. The town will have no clearing or installation expenses and he was directed to Norwich Solar Technologies of White River Junction the developer for the site.

IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes - 24 June, 2019

A motion was made by Michael Todd to approve the Minutes of 24 June, 2019, seconded by Tyler Harwell. Voted: Unanimously.

V. Discussion of potential inventory of dams

Tyler Harwell said he asked for the item to be included on the agenda and that he studied and researched old dams in New Hampshire. Old dams get forgotten about, they can cause big problems for towns and a town needs to know what it's got. Following discussion about the health and safety of local dams it was agreed that Tyler Harwell and Howard Beach, who both serve on the town Conservation Commission, would take this up with their other members.

VI. Zoning Bylaw Updates

(a) Airport Overlay District Map - updated and corrected

The Commission reviewed the (SWCRPC) updated and corrected oval shaping of the Town of Weathersfield Draft Airport Approach Overlay District. Sven Fedorow explained that the elevation has been determined where the runway is located.

A motion was made by Michael Todd to approve the map and for the Planning Commission to set up a Public Hearing, seconded by Howard Beach. Voted: Unanimously.

(b) 3.2 Conservation of Natural Resources bylaw

3.2.1 Agricultural zoning

There is no agricultural district in the Town of Weathersfield and ag. soils are located throughout the town. Sven Fedorow said there have been substantive changes and there is a process within the zoning bylaws to evaluate the status of protection of prime ag. soils. There was a discussion on sub-division regulations and fragmentation and a need to check on definitions.

Sven Fedorow will edit the proposed bylaw and have copies available at the next meeting.

3.2.2 Places having unique ecological interest or value

Discussion covered whether or not to include the Elizabeth H. Thompson 1992 Biological Natural Areas of Weathersfield study in the bylaw as a reference. Should specific sites be identified and what type of mitigation should be made on impacts to scenic, cultural, historic, ecological or any important resources identified in the Town Plan.

Sven Fedorow will have an edited copy available for the next meeting.

3.2.3 Connecticut River

It was agreed to delete this bylaw

3.2.5 Pond Construction

Following discussion it was agreed to retain proposed Item (c) The creation of ponds and other impoundments less than 5,000 cubic feet is allowed as an accessory use upon application and receipt of a zoning permit. Subject to any size over 5,000 c.u. approval should be the responsibility of the Department of Environmental Conservation.

3.2.7 Steep Slopes and High Elevation

During discussion on height, and percentages greater than 25 percent, it was mentioned that percentages are no longer used but different types of soils were taken into consideration for stability where land is highly susceptible to erosion. Howard Beach suggested changing the language for 25 percent and to simplify measurements. It was also agreed that a topographical map of Weathersfield be located. Sven Fedorow will research examples where height is involved in other towns and defer to the State regarding erosion.

VII. Next meeting agenda

Zoning Bylaw Updates: Streambank conservation, Wetlands and Damaged structures
Updated Excel list of approved bylaws and those outstanding

VIII. Adjourn

A motion was made by Michael Todd to adjourn at 9:03pm, seconded by Howard Beach. Voted:
Unanimously