

***PLANNING COMMISSION***  
**Draft Minutes**  
**November 5, 2015**

**Members Present:** Sally Miller, Nick Scheu, Susan Boston, Keri Cole, Sam Segal  
**Members Absent:** Paul Highberg, Marilyn Spaulding  
**Others Present:** Michael Brands

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The July 1, 2015 minutes were approved as submitted.

The approval of the October 8, 2015 minutes was continued.

**III. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. East End Discussion**

The PC continued the East End discussion from the October 8, 2015 meeting. The topic is gaining a lot of interest. Twenty-five people showed up at a recent East End meeting sponsored by Sustainable Woodstock. The group included the area property owners and a number of Town and Village officials.

The group would like to write a master plan of the East End. They've started their research with the 2000 East End Study written by Landworks. Chair Miller would like the PC to become more involved with this, especially concerning a new East End plan. The Town/Village Comprehensive Plan does not fully cover the concerns of the East End and could use enhancement.

The next meeting of this group is scheduled for Monday, November 23, 2015, to be held at 5:30 p.m. at the Simmons House. If too many people are expected, the venue will be changed. A reminder notice will be sent to PC members.

Chair Miller noted she has access to many of the documents the group has been researching. A number of PC members were interested in receiving a list of area properties and their values.

The park and ride lot was discussed. The Village has funding from the state to build a small park and ride lot on the west end of the Village's East End lot. The work is scheduled to start later this year. At the moment the lot will not be paved and a proposed stone wall will not be built.

This led to a discussion of bus parking. If the lot were to be used for a park and ride, where will buses park? The bus parking is a major issue in foliage season. The PC discussed a number of alternative locations for the buses. One would be just east of the north parking lot for the Billings Farm and Museum. Another area would be the XC ski overflow lot just south of the Woodstock Inn's Sports Center. A sizeable parcel of land is required as the buses require a large area for turning around.

The Town Planner will discuss the bus parking situation with the Town Manager.

#### **B. VERI - Vermont Economic Resilience Initiative**

The State is looking for municipalities to commit to an implementation initiative. This would be selected from a list contained within the Town's VERI final report.

Pete Fellows, TRORC, suggested a riparian buffer easement on land located between the Lincoln Covered Inn and the River Side Mobile Home Park. This is an initiative with a low cost but high impact. Reestablishment of the 100' riparian buffer would help protect the mobile home park from future flooding events. The riparian vegetation, once mature, would filter debris and sediment, and would slow flood waters.

The area is owned by a local farmer and is usually planted with corn or soybeans. This year the fields have been left fallow. Approximately three-fourths of the riparian vegetation is in place. The area to the west is too difficult for cultivation and has been left to grow out naturally for many years. The Town Planner noted the cultivated fields stop just short of the river bank leaving a narrow strip of mature trees and shrubs. This eastern area is located directly across the river from the mobile home park and is +/- 500' long.

Mr. Segal and Ms. Cole noted sewer and water infrastructure upgrades are also very important. During Tropical Storm Irene both services were inoperable due to heavy flood damage.

After discussion, the PC agreed that the best option to pursue would be the riparian easement west of the River Side Mobile Home Park, but also agreed the WAC and Town Sewer infrastructure upgrades, although more costly, are very important to the community.

The Town Planner noted the riparian easement initiative was also reviewed and supported by the Conservation Commission at their last meeting.

#### **C. Siting of Solar Facilities**

Chair Miller showed the PC a map demonstrating Woodstock parcels with solar potential. The map was created by Pete Fellows, TRORC. Due to Woodstock's forested and hilly nature, there are few areas conducive to solar panel placement.

The State's renewable energy goal is to be completely dependent on alternative energy sources by 2050. Woodstock's estimated share of this would be 41 acres of solar panel installation.

In discussing the Solar Siting Ordinance, adopted by the Selectboard earlier this year, the PC agreed a rewrite is necessary. The standards are written in a very negative manner with unenforceable criteria. They should be rewritten in a more positive light that encourages solar development in certain areas.

Mr. Segal suggested a survey could be handed out to Town Meeting participants in March. This would give the PC an idea of what the community wants regarding solar development.

The Town Planner noted that the timing works because the State Solar Siting Committee will have a report due in March as well. The State's report should provide improved guidelines for the PSB solar review process.

The Town Planner relayed thoughts from a recent VLCT sponsored P&Z Forum which was focused on the PSB solar siting review process. An important point in energy production is transitioning from huge site specific powerplants to numerous, very small solar/wind farms spread throughout the State. The PSB does have the ability to correct the process, as they do not have a direct overseer.

#### **D. Town Zoning Regulations**

##### **1. Internally illuminated signage**

Mr. Scheu discussed the recently installed WUHS internally illuminated digital sign. He attended, as an abutter, the two TDRB hearings on the permitting and subsequent review of the sign. At times the sign is very bright at night. Apparently this is caused when the brighter lighting required for daytime use is not turned down for nighttime use.

The Town Planner noted the operation of the sign has not yet matured. There are many days when the sign is not illuminated at all.

Mr. Scheu felt the TDRB's review process addressed the "static" requirement of the sign well. They conditioned the permit with a no less than two hour interval for sign change. The school initially desired a change every 15 seconds.

The school, at the review session, stated their frustration with the two-hour change interval. The original intent of the digital sign was to allow more signage over the course of the day. They have no desire for animation or scrolling messages. A public hearing would be required to amend the permit condition.

Mr. Scheu suggested the PC write a definition of static in the regulations. The TDRB agreed a definition would be very helpful to their review process.

In addition, the PC discussed the lumen level and suggested criteria be added to address this as well.

##### **2. Wetlands**

The Town Manager is asking for a change in the Town's Wetland regulations. He was unable to attend, but submitted a draft amendment for review purposes.

The current regulations allow, with review by the CC and the TDRB, for work within a wetland, but not within the 100' buffer area. The PC agreed this disconnect needs to be corrected.

The Town Planner distributed a draft of the proposed changes. The PC discussed the changes at length.

The PC agreed the 100' buffer is good to have as it offers the State recommended area

of protection to wetlands. The PC also agreed that criteria for work within the buffer area needs to be added.

**After additional discussion, Mr. Segal motioned with a second by Ms. Boston to**

- 1) retain the 100' buffer**
- 2) remove subsection d. of the draft**
- 3) remove the last sentence of subsection e. of the draft and to hold a public hearing on December 2, 2015.**

**The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.**

The Town Planner will post a public hearing notice and write the PC approved draft amendment.

**IV. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for December 2, 2015 at 7:30 pm.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Brands, AICP  
Town/Village Planner