

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
DRAFT MINUTES
October 19, 2016**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Byron Quinn, Al Alessi, Lea Kachadorian, Cyndy Kozara, Bethany Powers
MEMBERS ABSENT: Lynn Peterson, One Vacancy
OTHERS PRESENT: Bo Gibbs, Michael Brands

I. OPENING OF MEETING

Chair Quinn opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

II. MINUTES

The minutes of September 21, 2016 were approved as submitted.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. Vacancy

Last month, Lina Histrova submitted her resignation from the CC as she is unable to attend meetings due to a conflictive work schedule.

Ms. Gibbs met with the CC in September and after the meeting asked for time to consider becoming a member. She had been an original member at the time the CC was formed in April 1989. Today after consideration, she asked to join the CC.

After discussion, a unanimous vote recommended Ms. Gibbs as a new member to fill a current vacancy. The Town Planner will pass the information along to the Select Board, who actually make the official appointment.

B. Town Zoning Update

The Planning Commission is working on a list of changes to the Town Zoning Regulations. The list was distributed to the CC. The TDRB had been invited to the PC October meeting but were unable to attend. The PC have reset the meeting with the TDRB for November 2, 2016, at which time they hope to finalize the proposed amendments.

A current request for a cheese storage and aging facility in West Woodstock has tabled the immediate consideration of the amendments. The Plymouth Cheese Factory is

seeking a site on Route 4 that would be amenable to large truck access. The facility would be a 14,000 square foot barn. The preferred site is a 2.5 acre tract of land located between the Lincoln Covered Inn and Woodstock True Value. A Zoning Map amendment would be required. The owners would like to start construction next Spring.

C. Wetland and Riparian Permit Updates

There has been no action on the Meadow Ridge Farm LLC application, which is asking for an after-the-fact permit to construct an 1,100' long driveway through a wetland buffer. The State Wetland official, Rebecca Chalmers, recommended the driveway be removed and asked the owner to supply reasons why a gate or other entrance control system does not work. The engineer working with the land owner is no longer working with the owner. The Town Planner will contact Ms. Chalmers for additional information.

The Levins, owners of property located on Noah Wood Road - site of a formerly unpermitted excavation within a riparian buffer, have almost completed the TDRB approved mitigation plan. The site is graded but needs grass seed and mulch to be applied to prevent additional erosion. The land owner has been informed.

The Town Planner distributed a hard copy of the State's "Planting Guidance for Revegetation of Riparian Areas in Vermont". The eight page document provides good instruction on what and how to plant in a riparian buffer zone. The guide should be very useful in future riparian application reviews. The Town Planner will distribute it to all future riparian buffer applicants.

D. Four Corners Update

The Town Planner did a quick review of the four corners area of Woodstock, Reading, Bridgewater and Plymouth. The State has just released a new Atlas map with specific data on forest blocks. The maps show the four corners to be a very important wildlife corridor area with potential ties to the Mt. Ascutney area located to the south and the east. The information is brand new and should be finalized in the first quarter of 2017. The Town Planner will continue working with Pete Fellows of the TRORC to move the project forward.

Approximately two years ago, the CC had received instruction on the State's Atlas mapping systems which includes a mass of biological data. Mr. Alessi suggested a renewal course would be very helpful whereby members could bring in their laptops for hands on learning. The Town Planner will ask Mr. Fellows to set up such a session for a future meeting.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

A. WRC Mountain Bike Trails

The Town Planner had expected a full review of the WRC mountain bike trails that had been constructed on the Mt. Peg area this year. The application was not completed in a timely manner and has been postponed to a later date, hopefully next month. The Town Planner did a quick review of the proposed mountain bike trail system. Of major concern is a series of four connected vernal pools at the top of Mt. Peg. In addition, a wetland

located near Hartland Hill Road within 1500' of the vernal pools creates an amphibian life zone. The Town Planner did not have a map of the bike trails but did show the CC an orthophoto map of the area.

B. Time Change

The CC questioned whether they were allowed to change the start time of the monthly meeting. The Town Planner noted that is the prerogative of the board. After discussion, the CC unanimously agreed to move the start time back to 7:00 pm with an intended 8:30 pm stop time. The change was unanimous and will begin with the November 16, 2016 meeting.

VI. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for November 16, 2016 with a 7:00 pm start time.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Submitted by:

Michael Brands, AICP
Town Planner