

**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**Draft Minutes**  
**May 2, 2018**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Sally Miller, Sara Stadler, Eric Goldberg, Sam Segal, Michael Pacht, Susan Boston, Jeff Bendis  
**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None  
**OTHERS PRESENT:** Michael Brands

**I. OPENING**

Chair Miller opened the meeting at 7:30 pm.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the April 4, 2018 were approved as submitted.

**III. OTHER BUSINESS**

**A. Enhanced Energy**

The Town Planner responded to a question raised in the April 4<sup>th</sup> minutes concerning Town Plan adoption. The PC questioned whether or not an individual chapter of a plan could be adopted or does the whole plan have to be adopted. The Town Planner stated the whole plan is required to be adopted, however one can adopt a specific chapter or amendment as long as the rest of the plan is somewhat up to date. In this instance the Energy Chapter will be amended. The adoption for this chapter, due to a recently added State mandate, would require updated text on forest blocks and wildlife habitat. At a later date one could add the education and health chapters when they are finalized.

There was also a reference to how a view shed regulation could be enacted. The most efficient method would be to use the current Scenic Ridgeline regs as a base model. The regulation contains numerous visual criteria that could easily be adopted to a view shed analysis.

A question was raised on where to find Section 506 Wireless Telecommunication Facilities. The 15 page section was adopted in 2002. It is lengthy and hardly ever used. It is considered an addendum to Zoning Regulations and therefore is not physically attached to the Zoning Regulations. It is available on the website or as a hard copy from the P&Z office.

## **B. Village Historic Survey**

Mr. Pacht gave a brief update on the State Office of Historic Preservation's Village Historic Survey public meeting. An Act 250 permit to enable the demolition of the Stone House located in the East End Gerrish property, required the property owner to fund a \$50,000 rewrite of the Village Historic Survey. The public meeting was the start of the process. Approximately 30 persons attended. The PAL (Public Archaeology Laboratory) group from Rhode Island won the contract to do the work. Last year, PAL worked with the Marsh Billings National Park and the Billings Farm and Museum on a historic documentation process. A team of two PAL employees spent a week in Woodstock taking photographs of all the Village buildings and also visited with the Woodstock Historic Society and the Planning and Zoning Office. A draft document is due in August with a final hearing to be held in November. In early 2019, the document will be filed with the Federal Historic Preservation office. There is a strong potential to add homes to the current 1973 historic survey as the base eligibility standard is a 50 year old structure.

## **C. Visioning Revisited**

Mr. Bendis discussed the Woodstock Visioning start up meeting which had been held today at noon. There were 30 participants, many of which have lived in Woodstock for less than five years. A visioning workshop by the Vermont Council on Rural Development group took place 13 years ago. Sustainable Woodstock was created from this initiative. At that time 4 main topics were chosen for further study: the East End, town-village merger, a bike path, and community identity. Many of the newer community residents felt the Town Plan serves as Woodstock's vision statement. The next meeting will take place on May 21. The Town Planner will send additional information along.

## **D. Housing**

Ms. Boston presented a short update on the Housing Committee. The Economic Development Committee is funding a housing study which should be available within a few weeks. Doug Kennedy of Norwich was hired to research the subject.

## **E. Health Care Study**

Ms. Stadler reported on a Health Care Study being funded by Mt. Ascutney Hospital. The process is just getting underway with no set meetings as of yet. The study revolves around obesity and physical fitness issues.

# **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

## **A. Energy Chapter Rewrite**

The Town Planner spoke with Pete Fellows, TRORC GIS Planner, on the PC's desire to reproduce the scenic view shed study maps. An available technology, LIDAR, a laser based method of creating detailed maps, is now available. Mr. Fellows recommended a planning grant to cover the costs, >\$25,000. The technology is new. New software would be required which in turn presents a learning curve and time commitment. He estimated at least a full week would be necessary. He works with 26 other towns and would not be able to commit a full week to Woodstock immediately. He suggested the PC select a few areas of major concern, such as areas close to the Village that could be run through the LIDAR process.

The PC agreed a map should show areas that are not visible from public views. There must be small pockets here and there on the hill sides available for solar development.

The Town Planner stated that a solar farm would also need proximity to power lines. Invisible areas near power lines are the perfect placement sites.

Mr. Segal felt a solar farm could be placed on Mt. Peg that would be invisible from public views and be close to powerlines.

A discussion of high profile properties would require additional review. However the State would like a list/map of properties that need no additional review but would be eligible immediately for solar placement. This needs to be worked out by the PC.

A discussion of solar farm size and what makes one a commercial project took place. One method would be to allow smaller or medium sized solar farms yet prohibit large scale projects. Apparently any facility producing more than 15 Kw is a commercial project. The Town Planner will research this question.

Mr. Bendis asked that a proper definition of view shed and the regulatory language addressing view shed development be determined. Standards need to be created versus adopting a blanket approval or denial approach via a map.

Such standards might include the amount of time a site is viewed while driving down the road.

Mr. Segal suggested the viewshed time of a walk along a Village sidewalk should be addressed as well.

The PC questioned the size of the Woodstock Aqueduct's Route 12 solar facility.

The Town Planner felt a size determinant such as square feet or acreage may be a standard to seek.

The PC asked if Mr. Fellows could rework his view shed maps using current information but with different criteria.

## **B. Village Zoning Rewrite**

The PC restarted the Village Zoning rewrite process by starting at the beginning of the Town Planner's list of potential changes.

After lengthy discussion, the PC agreed to reduce the riparian buffer zone to a 50' area versus the current 100' buffer area. The Conservation Commission recommended to retain the 100' buffer area if the area was undeveloped. However, the PC agreed it would be more equitable and less confusing if the buffer area was the same for the entire Village.

The PC also agreed to accept the Town Planner's text regarding developed areas within the riparian buffer. This was rewritten from the State's River Corridor model ordinance.

It would prohibit development on the river side of a structure but allow development via review on the street side of a structure. A diagram accompanies the text.

The change in driveway or walkway materials was discussed and left as is. The issue has stormwater implications that will be reviewed in a proposed section of stormwater. Town Planner has written a Village stormwater section, which is based on the Town version.

On the issue of landscaping and street furniture specific to the streetscape, the PC agreed to wait until the recently hired (via EDC) street scape consultant report is submitted.

The issue of color as a Design Review element of review was discussed and rejected.

The PC will continue the Zoning Regulation review with parking at its next meeting.

**V. NEW BUSINESS - None**

**VI. NEXT MEETING**

The next regularly scheduled meeting is June 6, 2018.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Brands, AICP  
Town/Village Planner