



Woodstock, Vermont

The Shire Town of Windsor County

TOWN-VILLAGE MANAGER GOVERNMENT

Town Hall • P.O. Box 488 • Woodstock, Vermont 05091 • 802/457-3456

PLANNING COMMISSION

**Special Meeting
September 24, 2018
DRAFT Minutes**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sam Segal, Susan Boston, Sara Stadler Eric Goldberg, Michael Pacht
MEMBERS ABSENT: One Vacancy, Sally Miller,
OTHERS PRESENT: Zach Ralph

I. OPENING

Chair Miller opened the meeting at 7:30 pm.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The approval of minutes was placed on hold.

III. NEW BUSINESS - None

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Energy Chapter Rewrite

Mr. Ralph, a member of the Sustainable Woodstock Energy Committee (SWEC), presented a power point presentation on the SWEC recommended changes to the Town Plan's Energy Chapter. A digital version was submitted earlier today, proposed changes are highlighted in blue. To save time, Mr. Ralph reviewed only the major proposals.

A key concern is to have up-to-date data as the current text has 2016 information generated by TRORC. The new information is based on 2018 and is generated by the Energy Action Network Dashboard.

Another major area of concern is page 10 of the document, where recommended sites for alternative energy facilities. Buffers have been an issue with the PC in each discussion.

The SWEC recommends that the Town follow the State guidelines as a starting point. The State proposes different buffers for the various sized facilities and from the various roads the buffers are measured from. The minimum is a 100' from edge of pavement on State highways for a 50 kw site. Realistically, the PC proposed buffer of 500' would have been thrown out by the Public Service Board as being overly prohibitive.



As a known example, the Woodstock Aqueduct solar farm is a 59 kW facility. It has tracking panels. These require fewer panels as the panel moves with the sun direction to maximize solar intake. Fixed systems require many more panels to generate an equal amount of electricity. Trackers require +/-40% fewer panels than fixed. Approximately 1- 1.5 acres is required for a 150 kW system.

A typical home system cost \$14,000. Trackers and fixed systems are essentially the same price due to the fewer panels required for the trackers.

Mr. Ralph discussed the different alternative energy systems - hydro, wind, bio mass, in relationship to placement. The TRORC energy / view shed map was reviewed for this purpose.

A question on "hub height" was raised. This is a measurement used to determine the height of wind turbines. Apparently they range in size from 25' to 100' tall.

There are numerous additional minor edits as well.

Mr. Ralph read the proposed opening paragraph linking George Perkins Marsh to the future need to reduce carbon impacts.

Mr. Ralph discussed Sequestered Carbon and other SWEC projects. A statute of George Perkins Marsh, and reusable bags to eliminate plastic waste are proposed.

Mr. Goldberg noted that mitigation such as landscaping was mentioned in earlier discussions.

Mr. Segal stated he did not see landscaping written in the rewrite. More detailed standards could be part of a TDRB review process.

Mr. Ralph suggested an additional mitigation request could be the use of all-black panels versus the more common silver framed blue panels.

Ms. Stadler asked how many other towns are doing an energy chapter rewrite.

Mr. Ralph noted Hartland and Ludlow have written an "enhanced" energy chapter for their plans, but have adhered to the State model in doing so.

Mr. Segal asked if it was possible to have a clearer energy /view shed map to view the impact of the Scenic Ridgeline on facility placement.

Mr. Pacht asked if an overlay map would be necessary to show proposed areas of placement.

Mr. Segal stated this is not a zoning process and is simply advisory, therefore an overlap map would not be needed.

Ms. Boston noted the Public Service Board also needs to approve the final version of the text. Mr. Goldberg asked what language is binding and how is it enforced? How do appeals happen?

Ms. Boston stated this is just a recommendation to the Public Service Board and is therefore not binding.

Mr. Ralph reviewed a number of the proposed action items with the PC.

A discussion of electric school buses ensued. School buses are required to be retired after 5 years of service, therefore electric buses would never pay off at the end of their 5 year life cycle.

The PC then discussed electric vehicle use and the recharging process.

Mr. Ralph left.

The PC was asked to study the proposed changes and be ready to discuss them at the next meeting.

Mr. Segal suggested using the Scenic Ridgeline map as a view shed protector, however there may be other areas of concern that may need addressing in addition to the SR district.

B. Village Zoning Rewrite

Ms. Stadler asked if there has been any PC reaction to the High Street complaints concerning Short Term Rentals (STR) in the Village.

Enforcement of STR is very difficult. The multiple “non-paying” users issue, family and friends, is hard to control. The number of uses per year is difficult to tabulate. Enforcement depends on neighborhood involvement. A bond, paid up front, was suggested.

Owners need to be held accountable. The rules need to be enforced. But rules need to be written so they can be enforced.

Enforcement is extremely costly as attorney fees are required for any court action.

Mr. Goldberg suggested paying additional fees up front to cover future litigation. Similar to the wedding enforcement issues, establish a fee to cover the costs.

Mr. Pacht suggested a lien on the property. If a violation occurs, the Town could place a lien on the owner’s property.

Although, Short Term Rentals were discussed at length, there were no changes proposed.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Inn Annex

Mr. Pacht asked about the Inn Annex language written for a recent zoning change request in South Woodstock. Are the number of units in an inn annex restricted? Are apartments allowed? Are cooking facilities allowed?

Mr. Segal felt that number would be determined by the Conditional Use review process.

VII. NEXT MEETING

The next regularly scheduled meeting is October 3, 2018.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Brands, AICP
Town/Village Planner