

I - Call to Order

PC Members attending- Dennis Casey, Chair, Norm Cota, Jeff Keeney, Hugh Johnson, and Dan Nugent

Others present- Robert Turner for Conservation Commission (CC), Dave Wetmore

7:00 PM –Dennis called the PC meeting to order. Dave took minutes.

II- Minutes

4/20/2017 minutes review- Jeff moved as corrected, Dan N. 2nds. Approved 5-yes and 0-no, Dennis signed.

III- Visitors Business and Adjustments to agenda

No visitors

IV- PC Business

1. Robert Turner representing the Conservation Commission (CC)-

Dennis welcomed Robert and asked Dave to outline participation requests from the CC regarding amendments to the Town Plan.

Dave- outlined that the MP Grant seeks to accomplish updates to the Town Plan, specifically Plan data, and significant review of the energy, and hazard mitigation elements. Last fall Dave he had reached out to many different groups/individuals to assist with review of specific “Community Assessment” elements. CC had been requested to review and suggest amendments to the “Community Assessment” part of the Town Plan, specifically pages 33-43. Further, the PC is anticipating the CC would assist with review/amendments/updates of the Community Plan sections;

1. The “General Goals” on page 48
2. Recreation- goals, objectives and policies (GOP), page 56
3. Natural Resources, GOP, page 61, and
4. Resource maps, FEMA, Significant Natural Features, Threatened and endangered, etc.

Dave noted that ACT 174 is a law that allows Towns to seek “substantial deference” as opposed to “due consideration” for siting of renewable energy projects considered for approval in the Section 248 review process. Is this another area that the CC wishes to participate? PC has not fully decided how this review would take place but forming a working group to help with this around the “energy” element of the Plan seems reasonable.

Robert- expressed that he has reviewed the sections noted above. CC has discussed the requirements of Act 174. CC active participating membership is down and he is concerned about over committing the CC. That said, the CC wants to participate and is committed assisting with the Town Plan. At this time CC does not have the time or people to take more, especially a topic as large as renewable energy. He felt that Starksboro residents are supportive of renewable energy. Robert suggested reaching out to the community for those interested in participation on a working group for the purpose of working on the “energy” element. PC agreed and noted that they had met with Digger Fasey and Caleb Elder for this purpose. Jeff will be posting a notice on FPF. Robert suggested that the PC look closely at how much of the energy element they want to take on at this time?

Robert- regrets that he was unable to attend the presentation by the UVM students whom presented on Act 171, forest fragmentation. He thanked the PC members whom attended. Robert had initiated this review. The focus of the students work was not entirely what Robert had hoped for.

Plan review and update-

Robert- briefly discussed the element pieces that need to be updated. He asked if Brandy is available to search out certain data? Dave felt that it was an appropriate use of the Grant monies.

Robert- discussed the Agency of Natural Resources Bio-Finder. This is a next step GIS analytical tool that prioritizes forest resources by interpreting and weighting data. He used the example that significant "Forest Blocks" has been done Statewide. Robert expressed the desire to explore how the Bio-Finder could assist them with their work on Plan amendments/update. He will be attending a workshop on bio-finder use on May 10th. Robert suggested that the G-O-P needs to be reviewed and prioritized to determine what can be effectively achieved.

Robert- asked what was happening regarding Act 64. Act 64 is a clean water law that seeks a joint effort between the public and private sectors to accomplish the goals of the law. Dave noted that Towns are largely responsible for runoff from town roads. This piece should be addressed in the Plan. Robert noted that ground water mapping has been done throughout much of Starksboro and that Eric Hanson is a resource to get the rest done. Dave asked if this information is available?

Robert- he and the CC are prepared to assist where they can. He expressed that policies need to be reviewed and revised in light of new information, surveys and practical observation. Robert will work to update the community assessment piece and return at the June 15th PC meeting.

PC- asked how accurate is the Bio-Finder? Is it verifiable? Robert suggested he will be better prepared to answer that at June 15th meeting. Robert left at 8:15PM.

2. Comments from ACCT/PC discussion with Mary Jackman

PC observed that Ms. Jackman has a very difficult job. ACCT's hands are tied when it comes to making progress on improvements to Park infrastructure and Park resident quality of life/relations. PC hopes that they will receive the Newsletter. Clearly, it is not a goal for ACCT to reduce housing density due to overhead costs.

3. Energy working group formation

PC supports the formation of a working group to focus on the "Energy" element of the Plan. Jeff will post on FPF and will work w/Digger to get this group formed. Dave suggests that at least one PC member should participate on the group. Dave note that there is a workshop focusing on ACT 174 at ACRPC Tuesday at 5:30 PM. Dave and Jeff will attend. Dave commented that the 1st task of the working group should be whether Starksboro should seek "substantial deference" Plan status.

4. Community Survey Results

Brandy is continuing to compile the results of the survey and will share them with the PC at a future meeting. The meeting may need to be held on a different night to accommodate her schedule.

V- Other

Dave- stated that he had posted a notice of tonight's PC meeting on FPF. Dennis noted that he had seen the posting. Dave asked if the entire agenda should have been posted? PC commented that perhaps a little more detail could have been included like the fact the Robert was scheduled to discuss CC participation on Town Plan amendments.

Green Lantern- Sam Carlson has asked to meet w/ PC. Dave will invite for May 18 or June 1 meeting.

Mail-

VLCT Spring Planning and Zoning Forum – June 14, 2017, Lake Morrey
ACT 174 workshop, May 9, 5:30 PM, ACRPC
Green Lantern solar siting proposal

VI- Adjournment

Norm moved to adjourn at 8:50 PM, Hugh 2nds. Motion to adjourn, 5- yes, 0-no.

DRAFT