

I - Call to Order

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

Others present- Raymond Leggett and Dave Wetmore

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

II- Minutes

Jeff moved the 2/2/2017 minutes as corrected, Dan N. 2nds. Approved 6-yes, 0-no,

III- Visitors Business and Adjustments to agenda

Raymond Leggett- Shared that he has talked with Dave W. and Ray expressed concern about siting of renewable energy projects. He continues to be very concerned with the negative effects of wind and solar energy projects, especially the larger more industrial projects. With VT’s goal to achieve 90% by 2050, Town Plans need to be clear and specific about where these projects should be placed. It is his opinion that these project are not green, destroying large amounts of wooded ridgelines and agricultural land. They are very disruptive of the environment. Solar panels are made from materials that are not all that recyclable and may be harmful to the land over time, i.e. aluminum and the components of the panels themselves. Ray has been involved/participated at the state level regarding these projects. No one wants to live next to one, and to date Towns have had very little say in the siting of these projects.

Dennis and Dan- Shared that the PC is aware that the Town Plan needs to be specific and address where renewable energy projects are sited. Dennis and Hugh noted that there is a big difference between due consideration and substantial deference and the PC is just beginning to understand the difference. Developing a Plan that meets the substantial deference test requires a lot of work and possible expense. Dave expressed that the siting standards and other factors related to renewable energy is a moving target as the Legislature is involved.

Raymond- expanded that the oxidation of aluminum combined with our acidic climate is a concern to him. While these projects will be sited for 25 years on a property, what are the long term effects of these solar projects? How dangerous is the materials used in the solar panels to the environment?.

Dan N.- asked if Ray had any conclusive evidence of the negative effects on the environment? Ray will send along some information. Dan H. suggested that the “Union of Concerned Scientists” website provides information related to leaching effects.

Dennis thanked Ray for attending.

Dave- noted for the PC that the DRB will meet on the 9th to apply the new Land Use Regulations for the 1st time. Dave led a discussion/training sessions with a couple of DRB members whom met on February 24th. It was very successful.

Dennis- commented on the All-Hazards Mitigation Plan (HMP) that is being drafted in cooperation with ACRPC. This is now required and will be an addendum to the Town Plan. Dave commented that Jan McCleery had asked that the draft HMP be sent to the CC for review. Tim Bouton will send Jan a copy.

Dave also explained that if the CC has any comments they need to make them before the Selectboard approves the HMP. Once it is sent to FEMA for review, changes are very difficult.

IV- PC Business

Review of draft questionnaire continued-

PC worked on questions 1-20 last month. In addition to the edits noted in the 2/2/2017 minutes, Jan McCleery and Dan Baker submitted comments. Also the renewable energy viewshed questions need review by PC tonight.

Dave shared that Jan had asked if question 20 of the survey could be reworded? The PC noted that they made edits to this question on 2/2. It will now read

20. “Have you used the nature trail loop at Cota Field”?

Jan also asked the PC to include the following;

21. Would you support connecting “Cota Trail” to the Village if possible?

22. Would you support developing a trail between Brookside Mobile Home Park and Robinson School, if possible?

PC agreed to include Jan’s suggestions. It was also noted that in the past, Hank Bissell has not been interested in having an established trail cross his property.

Dan Baker’ suggestions are attached. The PC acknowledged that Dan had attended the 2/2/ meeting and offered little comments. PC agreed to the following edits.

**Question 5. Add “general area” to What part of Town do you live in? (general area)
5.C- add “Shaker Hill”**

**Question 8.
8.A- add syrup
8.F- Work in the agricultural/forestry industry?**

Questions 10-18- add “unsure” check box where appropriate.

Question 19- edit as follows; Would you use public transportation more regularly if it ran more frequently?

Review of Viewshed/renewable energy siting survey questions.

PC discussed that almost any renewable energy siting will require a robust electric grid system, preferably 3-phase, although 150 kW systems are being attached to single phase lines. At this point there is a dead end 3 phase that comes from Monkton to Starksboro Village and new 3-phase line from Lincoln along Downingsville Road. Dave noted that a map he has seen at ACRPC suggests that Starksboro has a lot of electric capacity, however the facts sited here suggest otherwise.

PC felt the viewshed siting map and questions work and are easy to understand. Dave suggests highlighting and underlining the word “**not**” in the opening statement. PC agreed.

Brandy will meet with the PC on March 16. PC asked Dave to make sure he sends these changes as well as the ones from 2/2/ to Brandy ASAP. The goal is to finish the survey on the 16th. PC is waiting on the energy consumption pieces. If the survey is not distributed in the April Gazette, then a notice about the survey needs to be in Gazette. FPF will also be used to get the word out. Town Website will have a link to survey on survey monkey. It will also be sent in the mail and available at the Town Office. Drop off points will include Town Office, Library and J-Store (if allowed by owner). The PC suggested that survey return deadline should be 2 weeks from time distributed. Return deadline will be noted on the survey. Residents need to be responsible and return in a timely manner. It's the PC job to get the word out.

V- Other

Mobile Home Park discussion- PC asked Dave to contact Mary Jackman and see if she would attend a future meeting (April or May). Mr. Leggett asked if the owner of the former ballfield in front of Brookside. Yes but he paid fair market values and will like seek to develop. PC reflected on their past efforts to improve student performance and resident quality of life. To date the Trust has not wanted had an interest in making changes to the Parks.

Ray Leggett- What do people think about commercial development? Has the Town considered design standards? PC observed that there are a minority of residents that are vocal and are not in favor of commercial development and support limited residential development. The new Land Use Regulations include architectural design standards. In general the PC felt that most residents would like to see some economic development that is in keeping with the scale of Starksboro and that would help with tax burdens while providing some services closer to home.

Agricultural survey/assessment- Dave shared the ag survey results with the PC. He doesn't expect the Board to review now but hopes members will review in preparation for any edits to the "community assessment section". PC discussed with Ray that the Town Plans development requires public input. In the past the PC has used the community survey discussed earlier, forums and working groups to gather public input. PC stated the purpose of the ag survey was to reach out a little further. Just another way to gather some resident input. Ray asked Dave to send him a survey.

VI- Adjournment

Norm moved to adjourn at 8:40 PM, Dan 2nds. Motion to adjourn 6- yes, 0-no.