

Town of Starksboro  
Planning Commission Meeting  
February 15, 2018  
Unapproved Minutes

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**Present:** Dennis Casey, Jeff Keeney, Hugh Johnson, Norm Cota, Dan Nugent, Dan Harris  
Unable to attend: Kelly Norris

**Others present:** Brandy Saxton (consultant), Rebecca Elder

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The meeting called to order at 7:00.

*Adjustment to the agenda:*

The meeting will start with review of the Town Plan draft with our consultant Brandy Saxton of PlaceSense. She has incorporated all of the edits from the Planning Commission and the plan is now in final layout. Her next steps are to insert the maps and tables, then to insert references for pages and sections once all other material is in place.

*Follow up questions:*

- A handful of items need to be filled in
- p. 39 policy area – are we happy with where this is and are there any more changes to the section
- Rebecca to comb through and cross reference to ensure all changes from the minutes are incorporated.
- Energy plan to be added as an appendix; add references to appendix in Town Plan. In a regulatory setting, the energy plan would be viewed as a part of the entire plan.

p. 2 – insert information about new Energy Committee. Description can be enhanced based on the language provided regarding the newly formed committee. Rebecca to insert mission statement and goals.

p. 5 - change “especially new ones” to especially new construction.

Jeff K. asked about the information about the preferred renewable energy sites: Brandy Saxton noted that there wasn't a consensus from the survey or energy forum discussion. Basically, Starksboro residents seem comfortable with small scale renewable energy (i.e. residential solar) but there were diverse opinions on larger scale projects (i.e. solar farms) and infrastructure. Generally, there was not support for utility scale projects. Less support was expressed for wind projects (not appropriate for Starksboro's landscape).

p.9 – Policy 3: “Provide walking and biking paths in large developments.” Brandy suggested it might be beneficial to add information here.

See town plan p.46 – O25 and O26 – RPC was looking for more specifics on sites

p.5 of Energy plan – encourage EV ready standards. Eliminate building code.

p.23 of Energy plan – delete “and Lake Dunmore”

p. 26 on energy plan – remove “agricultural” - There are no references to districts.

p.53 in the plan

p. 20 – leave one paragraph about energy use and then cross reference to the energy plan appendix.

p. 25-26 - renewable energy pieces can go and then cross reference

p.29 - leave this section and cross reference

Dennis Casey noted that the PC is looking at the energy plan as having the infrastructure to support renewable projects if desired in the future. However there are still significant challenges to the town's ability to support larger projects in the future (i.e. 3-phase power) For now, there are not businesses creating the demand for infrastructure growth. The PC needs to continually look at the energy situation going forward. Siting will become more of an issue once the infrastructure is in place.

- Should we be thinking about places to put solar even though it likely cannot happen or won't happen?
- Hugh Johnson: How can we say now that we think siting should be in a specific area when the power company may not support that siting?
- D. Casey: Given that no one in town is requiring or requesting more power, except for the sugarmakers, why would the utilities companies upgrade in Starksboro?
- Dan Nugent: If we had potential sites, the power company may be more likely to pursue upgrades. A plan might instill confidence.
- Brandy: The energy plan doesn't speak to infrastructure, but the town plan has some language included. The critical point is that the town cannot support much given the existing infrastructure. The town plan is where you can state your policy preferences. A CPG (certificate of public good) is still needed so the plan would be considered.
- The group discussed various aspects of what might be desired in the future to support local businesses and residential demand. We need to understand the balance of production and demand. Solar production isn't steady and because there are peaks, the balance is problematic.
- Dan N: It would be helpful to invite an expert on energy infrastructure to present to the PC and discuss how transmission/distribution might work for future planning.
  - Research some possible guests to invite to a future meeting.

p 29 - 3.5.06 – facilities and infrastructure – insert cross reference

Implementation section needs more specific information. The State has changed the requirements. The town will need to do an interim check in as part of the 8-year plan. We need to include 3- 4 things that the town will do/undertake and put those into a short implementation section.

- Town work on erosion control
- Planning for agricultural land that may not continue to be actively farmed. What would we encourage? Brandy noted that the VT Land Trust has a farmland access project to help match young farmers with viable farmland that goes on the market.
- Keeping an eye on the school supervisory union and the changes ahead. Due to consolidation, the town is giving up our school's role. It has been the center of the town for decades. What if the school closes? What would the town look like? Town doesn't own the building so the dynamics could shift significantly if further consolidation occurs in the future.
- Capital plan development – is this a good investment of time?
- Mobile home parks – There needs to be improved conditions for the kids. The PC touched on this 10 years ago when the town received a grant from the Orton Foundation (Art & Soul) but there weren't many lasting impacts. This is a larger issue and would require research and aid from external sources and experts. The PC will consider what steps could be helpful for assessment and community building.
- Identify 4-5 issues and areas for planning and improvement over the next 4-5 years.

Brandy will insert the maps. She will use most of the same ones from the last plan; only a few have updates. The tables will also be inserted. The 2010 data is the most recent (the next batch will be release in 2020)

The group discussed adding photos to enhance the layout. Rebecca will search for photos and provide to Brandy.

- Historic photos
- Recreation, walking path, ball field
- Town buildings – new shed 3.06.01
- School house
- Working lands – agriculture, sugaring
- Infrastructure, water, solar
- Picture of a public forum – town meeting?

**Action items - Brandy:**

- Ensure all edits are in
- Energy plan integration and changes
- Add implementation
- Finish graphics, maps, charts, photos

Rebecca will review the goals section.

Brandy departed at 8:15 p.m.

**Minutes of 2/1/18**

Minor corrections noted and will be corrected for final.

**Motion:** Dan Harris moved and Jeff Keeney seconded the motion to **approve the minutes of 2/1/18** with corrections. **Vote:** All in favor (6/0)

**Next meeting:**

Review interim zoning regulations and discuss what else might be needed. Invite DRB members to attend the 3/15 meeting if possible. Request an update from Rich Warren and Marjorie Dickstein on current issues and discussion at the regional planning level.

**Motion to adjourn:** Norm Cota moved, Dan Nugent seconded the motion.

**Vote:** All in favor (6/0)

The meeting concluded at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder  
Zoning Administrator

Approval date: \_\_\_\_\_

PC Chair: \_\_\_\_\_