

WEST WINDSOR PLANNING COMMISSION

Draft Minutes

April 11, 2011

Present: Hal Pyke, Barbara Truex, Mark Isenberg, Al Keiller, Glenn Seward, Martha Harrison

1. Call to Order – Chair Hal Pyke called the meeting to order at 10:35 AM.
2. Changes or Additions – None
3. Public Comment – None
4. Balancing economic development & environmental protection – Selectboard Chair Glenn Seward spoke to the Planning Commission about the need to stimulate economic development in West Windsor and suggested the Kingdom Trails at Burke Mountain as a possible model for developing and marketing our mountain bike trails. Glenn said he has spoken with the Planning Commission Chair and the Selectboard Chair in Burke who both said that, as a result of the Kingdom Trails, Burke is now a 4-season resort. Glenn said he has met with someone from the Vermont Mountain Biking Association (VMBA) to discuss various successful trail systems in the state. The deficiency in West Windsor's existing trail system is the lack of trails on beginner terrain. According to Glenn, VMBA indicated that adequate parking and an information kiosk are also important. Glenn said Jim Lyall and Erik Schutz from Sports Trails of the Ascutney Basin (STAB) were at the meeting with VMBA and they think the Resort is the best place for the hub of the trail system, including parking. Glenn said he has also spoken with a representative of the current owner of the Resort and was encouraged to proceed as long as they don't have to do anything. Glenn said he assured the owner's representative that, at this point, the town is only asking to use the parking lot and to mow some trails around the base area. Glenn said the STAB board is meeting tonight and will discuss this. Glenn said Tom Kennedy from the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission (SWCRPC) is very supportive and is suggesting a public-private partnership to help with funding. Glenn said Erik and Jim have suggested forming a regional committee because there are other locations in Windsor and Hartland that could be part of a network in the long-term. Glenn said there has not been a Town Forest committee meeting recently, so we will have to wait and see what they think of this idea. Glenn said the town has contracted with a forest ecologist to update the town forest management plan and it is important to make sure we don't have trails through environmentally sensitive areas before we encourage expanded use of the trails. Barbara asked about using the VAST snowmobile trail network for biking. Glenn said he's not sure how the snowmobile club's relationship with property owners works. Glenn said Tom Kenyon has come up with a way to get from the existing STAB network, across Route 44, to the VAST network. Glenn said one advantage of the existing network is that it only involves two property owners – the Resort and the Town. Glenn said he still needs to talk with Orange Lake about the idea of expanding the mountain bike trails. Mark asked how West Windsor compares to Burke. Glenn said Burke now has bike shops, restaurants and clothing stores that it didn't used to have. Hal asked if the town would have to make lease arrangements with the Resort to use the Cunningham building. Glenn said he thinks we just need a handshake agreement with the Resort to use the parking lot and mow some trails. Glenn said the town would provide the Resort with a Certificate of Insurance but the Resort would be covered under Vermont statute as well. Glenn said he needs help implementing all this. Mark asked how much of the trail

system is in the town forest. Glenn said a large portion. Mark suggested marketing the trails to the participants in the Vermont 50 and the Vermont 100 and contacting the State Department of Tourism for help in crafting a marketing campaign. Glenn said increasing the number of visitors to town by marketing West Windsor to mountain bikers could improve business at the General Store and make the ski area more attractive to a potential buyer by providing an off-season activity. Glenn said if visitors enjoy their experience here, they may come here to live. Mark agreed that recreation drives the real estate market. Glenn added that hopefully the water and wastewater feasibility study will improve the climate for development here. Glenn asked the Planning Commission for suggestions on how to move forward with this. Glenn said the State of Vermont has been very receptive to the idea of STAB building trails on state park property, and there have been discussions about building a trail to connect the state park camping area with the mountain biking trails in West Windsor. Al asked Glenn if he needs help organizing this into a work plan. Glenn said yes. Al said he would be happy to help organize the process. Glenn said he will talk with Ron Juneman at Orange Lake this week.

5. Access, driveway and road width standards – The PC discussed Section 3.2 and 3.2-1 of the West Windsor Zoning Regulations. Hal said the A-76 Standard is the standard for development roads. Barbara said the A-76 Standard calls for a 24' wide road, which she thinks is wider than necessary if it is only serving a few houses. Barbara added that requiring 24' wide roads contradicts the Town Plan's focus on maintaining rural character. Martha noted the narrower widths called for in the table that Jason Rasmussen sent to the PC. Hal said the B-71 standard calls for driveways with a minimum width of 12'. Barbara said for roads serving three or more houses, she would rather use the standard suggested in the table provided by Jason than the A-76 standard. Al asked if we can insert the table, which would provide the most flexibility. **Barbara made a motion to adopt the "Lane and Shoulder Widths for Rural Roads" table from the *Vermont State Standards for the Design of Transportation Construction, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation on Freeways, Roads and Streets, October 1997* and to insert the table in Section 3.2(E) of the West Windsor Zoning Regulations. Barbara also moved to specify that an access will only be deemed to serve a small housing development if it serves three (3) or more lots. Al seconded Barbara's motion.** Martha noted that the table only specifies width and does not specify slope, which she thinks the Planning Commission should address for public safety reasons. Hal said the A-76 Standard suggests a 10% grade but allows a slope up to 16% in mountainous terrain. **Al amended the motion to retain the slope language (#5 of the General Notes for Local Roads) from the A-76 standard (latest revision March 3, 2003). Barbara accepted the amendment to the motion, which passed unanimously.** Referring to language in the Transportation chapter of the Town Plan, Barbara said she doesn't think a private road that serves 3 or more houses should have to meet the same standards as a Class 3 town highway unless the residents who live on the road are petitioning to have the town take over the road. Martha noted that the word "should" is used, rather than "shall." Hal said because the word "should" is used, it's not a requirement and doesn't interfere with the motion just passed.
6. Discuss revised ridgeline language – Barbara said she doesn't think we can decide on the details until we have a defined overlay district. Al referred to the language in "Placement of Structures" and asked if that would apply to the view from the Town Forest. Hal said yes. Al said he thinks that's very expansive. Hal agreed. Martha said the PC could refer to the view

from public roads and not public properties if they so choose. Al said he would be in favor of that. There was discussion about the subjectivity involved in determining if something is offensive and the infringement on the rights of property owners. Barbara said she is concerned that the language proposed would not allow someone to clear in front of the house in order to have a view. There was discussion about the “Forest Cover” language and whether or not a homeowner would be required to keep all the trees that are adjacent to the house. Barbara said she doesn’t want to put more constraints on someone whose property happens to be on a wooded hillside as opposed to an open field. Barbara said she thinks we should protect the background tree line and the wildlife habitat. Hal said his interpretation is that the “trees [that] remain standing immediately adjacent to buildings” refers to trees on the side or at the rear of the house, not where they would block the view. Martha pointed out the language under “Landscaping and Screening.” There was discussion about dictating taste. Al said he thinks “ridgelines” and “open fields” should be separate issues. Al agreed with Barbara that the PC needs to see the map. There was discussion on how the boundary of the ridgeline district would be established - horizontally or along the slope 250’ from the peak. Martha said she will contact Jason about the status of the map.

7. Minutes - February 16th: **Al made a motion to approve the minutes of February 16th. Barbara seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. March 9th: The minutes of March 9th were tabled.**
8. Other Business - None
9. Adjourn – **The PC adjourned by consensus at Noon.**

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Harrison