

West Windsor Planning Commission  
Minutes  
March 27, 2019

Present: Al Keiller, Laura Stillson, Ray Shannis, Brendan Harrington, Jason Rasmussen, Pete Ferick, Bruce and Cathy Boedtger.

- 1) Call to Order Chair Al Keiller called the meeting to order at 6:31PM
- 2) Changes or Additions- None
- 3) Public Comment-None
- 4) “Greenville” Taking inspiration from a list that appeared in Oprah Magazine, Ray Shannis and Pete Ferick asked for the possibility of forming Town Sustainability Committee. Pete gave an example of a Tesla battery program with Green Mountain Power. For \$15 a month, a Tesla battery is installed your home and can be used as a back-up power during outages. GMP will also use the extra capacity during high demand times. Vermont is the only state that doesn’t charge homeowners an installation fee or capital costs with this program. Pete also outlined other possible programs such as a town wide compost project, Albert Bridge students growing produce at the school, or installing electric charging parking stations. Grant funding could be available for many of the sustainable projects. The PC suggested Ray and Pete try their hand at draft a chapter on sustainability, and they would review it at a future meeting. Otherwise, a sustainability component could be added to Chapter 1.
- 5) Updates to Town Plan:
  - Results of March Town Meeting survey—15 responses. The PC determined that a broader data base was needed before any conclusions are made. Al will revise the questions into a format that will be easier to tabulate and can be put out on Survey Monkey. The PC believes there will be more responses if they do an online survey as well as a direct mailing. Laura said she received feedback that people are interested in more than just recreation. For example, the recent Poetry Reading at the Butcher & Pantry drew over 70 people. She would like to get an idea of how many townspeople are actually using the mountain area, as she talks to many folks who never even go up to the Town Forest area. Cathy said when she thinks of AO and use of the mountain property, she thinks of the big events like Ragnar, VT 50 or Point to Point. In her mind she makes a distinction between participating in the big events and just walking or snowshoeing on the Town Forest property. Al pointed out we are also trying to determine the desire and support for further development of the mountain property.
  - Chapter 6 Recreation— Except for a starting all recommendations with a verb, the draft was generally thought to be ok. Deb asked about the recommendation of a trail through the wildlife management areas as she thought in the past the State didn’t seem favorable to that. Jason said the State is now, compared to the past, more agreeable as there is more of a public/private cooperation. He said verbally at least, Forest Parks and Recreation has been willing to approve a connector trail in the Ascutney Wildlife Management Area on a ‘let’s see how it goes’ basis. They might have to revisit it if it results in excessive use.. Cathy thought retroactive pull back of access could be like “trying to put a band-aid on a broken dam.” She said she was at the meeting tonight because she is concerned about the recreation plan. The mountain area was valued as a major wildlife corridor. She has noticed much less wildlife and an increase in rogue trails. She believes the mountain biking has impacted the wildlife in the Town Forest. Her opinion is that the wildlife management area would be adversely affected by a trail. Ray asked if it was AO making the rogue trails. Laura said it wasn’t AO per se, but her understanding was it was AO’s responsibility to maintain and manage the property according to the conservation easements placed upon it. According to Laura, the UVLT can completely shut down trails with no prior notice and fine the town if the easements aren’t being upheld. Perhaps with more town wide understanding /education of the trail easements that restrict development of the area, it would be easier to manage the resource. Mike asked if STAB would have control of this. Laura said

STAB maintains the trails, but AO has overall management of the area. The Conservation Commission is supposed to have oversight over AO, with the Town being ultimately responsible if the easements are not followed. The PC agreed for purposes of the Plan, a policy regarding oversight of the easements in the Town Forest and a recommendation to implement oversight and enforce of the easement requirement within town forest should be added. There could also be cross reference back to the language of the Town Forest in Chapter 3. There was also discussion of the ongoing STAB ATA merger. All agreed that the recommendation about using the conservation fund for recreation facilities and land purchase is no longer pertinent, and should be deleted. Jason asked about the capital fund improvement recommendation; Al said that is more appropriate to be put in Chapter 4.

- Chapter 11 Economic Development-Al suggested a few minor changes to wording in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraphs. Deb asked the Commission if they wanted any language to encourage non-traditional revenue/uses for existing farms as the legislature just passed new bill about this. After discussion, the Commission came to no unified decision. The PC recommended the economic development vision statement be deleted and “Develop the infrastructure and support system that encourages home based businesses” be added as a recommendation. Cathy wondered if the PC should address possibility of adopting River Corridors and how it had potential to dramatically change the way the Village could be used. Deb said if the town did adopt River Corridors in the future, it would not make it impossible to develop the Village, but it would restrict developing most current vacant lots. There could be some ‘infill’ and certainly improvement to existing buildings. Referring back to Chapter 1, Jason asked about putting the updated statistical data in an appendix instead of Chapter 1. The PC said with the exception of the population graph, it could be put into the appendix. The population graph could be in Chapter 1 and appendix.
  - Finalize Chapters 3&4 Deb said Martha has updated the chapters to reflect the sewer system completion, but she didn’t get a change to share it with the Commission. Al suggested due to the late hour, the PC could finalize chapters 3,4,6 and 11 at the next meeting.
- 6) Planning Budget—Deb explained the Planning Budget and the Zoning budget are combined for the purposes of the town report. She is Zoning Administrator and also clerk for both the Planning Commission and Development Review Board so there is quite a bit of overlap. What Al was concerned about was that PC supplies were listed as \$5000 over budget in 2018. Deb explained that it reflected a one-time purchase of fireproof filing cabinets for all of the zoning files. The Selectboard had previously suggested and approved of the fireproof filing cabinets.
  - 7) Approve Minutes **Ray moved to approve the February 13th minutes as written. Mike seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**
  - 8) Adjourn—After setting the next meeting for Thursday April 25 at 6:30 PM the Commission adjourned by unanimous consent 8:50 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Deb Shearer