

WEST WINDSOR PLANNING COMMISSION

Draft Minutes

May 29, 2013

Present: Al Keiller, Barbara Truex, Arthur Steinberg, Elvin Kaplan, Rudy Gross (Town Forest Committee Chair), Glenn Seward (Selectboard Chair), Martha Harrison

1. Call to Order – Planning Commission Chair Barbara Truex called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM.
2. Changes or Additions – ATVs in Town Forest: Barbara said she asked Rudy to share his thoughts about a possible amendment to the town's Act 250 permit to allow ATVs in the Town Forest. Rudy said he is only speaking for himself, not the Town Forest Committee. Rudy said he talked to Jackie Carr, who requested a map showing the trails that would be proposed for ATV usage. Jackie will then submit the plan to April Hensel. Rudy said the change to the Bicentennial Trail to address erosion issues, the cleaning up of the old gravel pit, and the addition of some new beginner mountain bike trails may all require Act 250 amendments. Rudy said he has asked if all the changes should be on one application or if each change should be on a separate application. Al asked if there is controversy about having ATVs in the town forest and, if so, what the process is for deciding whether the town goes forward with an application. Barbara said the PC's role would be to determine whether or not they need to include any related language in the Town Plan. Rudy said there are many questions that the Selectboard Chair would like answered before the Selectboard decides whether to move forward with an application. Al asked about the majority opinion on ATVs in the town forest. Rudy said he is sure there would be some dissent from people who feel they would be negatively impacted. Barbara noted that a number of ATV riders attended the last Selectboard meeting to make the case that it's their town forest too and accommodations should be made. Barbara noted that some of the trails appear to intersect bicycle trails, which might not be safe. Al suggested reflecting the issues without making a recommendation. Martha noted that the PC included an ATV question on their survey so they have data indicating that a majority of respondents were not in favor. Barbara suggested that, if the property behind the talc plant is donated to the town, that might be a good place for ATVs.
3. Consider approving town's application for amendments to Act 250 Land Use Permits relating to the existing sewer system from the Ascutney Mountain Resort to Windsor – Martha said the application is not ready yet.
4. Hazard Mitigation & Flood Resiliency Planning – Martha said she thinks the town should be more involved in the hazard mitigation planning process and the regional planning commission has grant funding to assist us. To be helpful, Martha said, the plan should address specifically what happened in West Windsor during Tropical Storm Irene and what we can do to reduce the likelihood of it happening again. Martha suggested that Mike Spackman and Jim Kenyon should be involved. Barbara noted that recent legislation requires that we include a "flood resiliency" element in our town plan by July 1, 2014. Martha said she has begun weaving discussion of flood issues into the existing text of certain chapters, including chapters 7 and 8.
5. 2013 VTrans Bicycle & Pedestrian Program – Martha said it would be a long, involved process to get a grant and she doesn't currently have time to pursue it but there are several different individuals and committees who are interested in pursuing pedestrian and bike projects in town so she wanted to make them, and the Planning Commission, aware of the opportunity. Martha said Courtney McKaig has expressed some interest in the grant. Martha

said it would be helpful to mention in the Town Plan that we are interested in pursuing a bike/pedestrian project. **Al made a motion to encourage Courtney McKaig to apply for this grant. Elvin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.** Glenn said he has a call into regional planning to see if they can help as well.

6. Initial Review – Town Plan Chapter 9 (Energy): Elvin said he thinks the existing Town Plan Energy chapter is too political. Elvin said he prefers the language in the Windham Town Plan. The PC agreed to eliminate much of West Windsor’s existing language and to include most of Windham’s. Martha noted the new state requirement that towns enforce the Vermont Residential Building Energy Code. Martha also noted the “Button Up Vermont” program and the availability of a “Kill-A-Watt” meter at the Library. The PC eliminated Recommendation #1, 5 and 6, and revised the remaining recommendations. Barbara said there may be interest in locating a solar installation behind the existing talc plant if the property is donated to the town. Barbara suggested including language about review standards for solar and wind projects in the Town Plan. Barbara added that the latest information on aesthetic and environmental impacts should be carefully considered.
7. Final Review – Town Plan Chapter 7 (Natural Resources): Arthur said Mill Brook should be tested for e. Coli. Glenn said testing is going to be done shortly. Barbara suggested including information about the Fire Department’s new rescue ATV in the Town Plan. The PC made minor changes to the recommendations in Chapter 7. Town Plan Chapter 8 (Transportation): The PC discussed Chapter 8 but did not make changes. Town Plan Chapter 5 (Education): There was discussion about whether and how to incorporate Arthur’s draft introduction. Elvin said he doesn’t think political statements should be included in the Town Plan. Barbara suggested noting that the town has no control over the state education tax rate. After discussion, the PC agreed to send the Education chapter to the School Board for comment.
8. Minutes – March 28th: **Barbara moved the approval of the minutes of March 28th. Elvin seconded the motion, which passed with Arthur abstaining.** April 29th: **Barbara moved the approval of the minutes of April 29th. Arthur seconded the motion, which passed with Elvin abstaining.**
9. Other Business – Next meeting: At their next meeting on Thursday, June 20th at 11:00 AM, the PC will do an initial review of Chapter 10 (Housing) and a final review of Chapter 9 (Energy).
10. Adjourn – **Elvin moved to adjourn at 11:00 AM. Arthur seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Harrison