

WEST WINDSOR PLANNING COMMISSION

Draft Minutes

November 21, 2014

Present: Barbara Truex, Arthur Steinberg, Al Keiller, Glenn Seward, Martha Harrison

1. Call to Order - Planning Commission Chair Barbara Truex called the meeting to order at 10:12 AM.
2. Changes or Additions – None
3. Public Comment – None
4. Review draft Flood Resilience chapter for Town Plan – Martha explained that the draft, if adopted, would become part of the current Town Plan and could then be used as the basis for our Flood Hazard Regulations. Arthur asked about the meaning of “stocking above the B-level” with regard to forestry. Martha explained that a “heavy cut” is when the residual stock of trees is below the “C-level” but levels vary according to species. Martha said she used logging language in case the plan gets appealed, so the town has a measurable industry standard. The Planning Commission (PC) agreed to also include language that the average person will understand. Martha noted that the “Silvicultural Guidelines” referred to by the VT Dept. of Forestry are not referenced in a specific document; they are a collection of articles on forestry that have been published over the past 50 years or so. Arthur suggested including the definition of “heavy cut.” Martha agreed and said she is also hoping to have Forest Ecologist Tii McLane review the chapter. Al asked about the idea of offering tax incentives to those who conserve floodplain property. Martha said the chapter just suggests considering the idea. Martha said she asked Evan Fitzgerald, who is doing the Phase 2 study of Mill Brook, about the effect of clear-cutting the side of Mt. Ascutney and he confirmed that it would increase flooding along Mill Brook. Arthur agreed that the town should consider adopting an ordinance regulating the storage of unsecured objects in the floodplain. The PC agreed to include that recommendation at the end of the chapter. On the one hand, Martha said, the town can’t regulate agriculture and forestry; on the other hand, we have an obligation to protect our citizens from known hazards. There was discussion about the number of existing structures in the floodplain. Martha said she will check her notes. Barbara mentioned the existing homes on Brook Road and in the village. Martha said the language allows for the protection of existing homes. There was discussion about the meaning of “bankfull width.” The PC questioned whether a design standard of “1.2 x bankfull width” is adequate. Martha said she will include a definition for “bankfull width” in the chapter. Barbara wondered if Green Mountain Power has ever considered moving their substation out of the floodplain. Barbara asked about the town’s Hazard Mitigation Plan. Martha said the Regional Planning Commission had a staffing change so the new employee will probably resume the process of revising the plan. Martha suggested consolidating the recommendations related to the revision of the zoning regulations. The PC agreed. Regarding the tax increase that would have been necessary to cover “Irene” damage if state and federal assistance had not been available, Al suggested noting that the increase would have been for one year only. Martha agreed. Al said the recommendations are very good but he wants to be sure they get done. The PC agreed to review the recommendations from one or two chapters at each meeting. The need for a second entrance to existing developments was discussed. The PC agreed to make the changes noted and warn a public hearing on the chapter for Thursday, January 8th at 6:30 PM.
5. Approve minutes – September 30th: **Arthur moved to approve the minutes of September 30, 2014, as written. Al seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**
6. Other Business - None
7. Adjourn – **The PC adjourned by consensus at 11:25 AM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Harrison