

WEST WINDSOR PLANNING COMMISSION

Draft Minutes
October 29, 2013

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

1. Call to Order – Planning Commission Chair Barbara Truex called the meeting to order at 10:35 AM.
2. Changes or Additions – Martha said Chapter 9 has not been revised.
3. Public Comment – Wind energy: Glenn Seward said there may be interest in establishing a single wind turbine at the ski area. Glenn said he has informed the prospective applicant that the draft language in the Energy chapter is not favorable to commercial wind energy. Al said he thinks the Planning Commission (PC) should be open-minded in light of the depressed local economy. Martha said the Public Service Board (PSB) doesn't have definitions for "residential," "commercial," and "utility" wind facilities. Martha also noted the PSB's proposed new "rebuttable presumption" that wind towers less than 150' high are okay. Martha said the state will consider the language in our Town Plan but, other than that, the town doesn't have much control. Elvin asked if the PC would favor a commercial wind turbine under any circumstances and, if so, what specific regulations would the PC like to have in place. Elvin asked if the PC would like to meet with resort representatives to discuss the idea. Al suggested considering allowing a wind turbine within the confines of the ski area, given that it's already developed and is already the source of a certain amount of noise (e.g. from snow guns). Glenn suggested that the PC consult with regional planning commission director Tom Kennedy. Barbara reviewed the requirements in the draft Energy chapter and suggested that the ski area could probably meet them. There was discussion about possible definitions for commercial wind facilities v. residential wind facilities, based on capacity, height, blade size, etc. Barbara asked if the proposed facility would be net metered. Glenn said he thinks it would. Barbara read the criteria for the "Quechee Analysis," which is used to evaluate aesthetic impact. ATV use: Glenn asked the PC to let the Selectboard know whether ATV use in the Town Forest is consistent with the Town Plan. Martha noted that, according to the PC's survey from last year, there were 2.2 negative responses to ATVs for every positive response. The PC discussed the Town Forest Committee's October 17th public forum on ATVs. Elvin did not find it objectionable to allow ATVs on a small portion of the network, especially for people who are no longer able to hike. Elvin suggested trying it for a year. Elvin said, regardless of what the town wants, it will never get through Act 250 given the objection of abutting property owners. Barbara noted the reference to the Town Forest on page 14 of the 2010 Town Plan. The PC discussed other references to the Town Forest in the current and draft Town Plans, and the restrictions associated with the town's Act 250 permit. Arthur noted the opposition of abutters to the use of motorized vehicles on Town Forest trails. Barbara noted that the Town Forest is public property. Al said he would be in favor of a one-year trial period. Elvin suggested adding a recommendation to the Recreation chapter. Al was concerned about adding a recommendation when there's no discussion of the issue in the narrative. Barbara noted that the Town Plan still needs to be reviewed at a public hearing and approved by the Selectboard. Barbara said consideration should be given to the impact on the mountain bike trails. Barbara said since the existing wording doesn't prohibit motorized vehicles, the PC could leave it as is. Al suggested informing the Selectboard that the PC is in favor of exploring a one-year trial period with Act 250. The PC agreed. Barbara said some people may want to hunt in the town forest and may need an ATV for access. Elvin noted that the recreational trails are closed during hunting season so there wouldn't be a conflict with hikers and mountain bikes.
4. Town Plan - Chapter 9 (Energy): Barbara noted Policy #1 in the Energy chapter, which prohibits commercial wind energy projects. Barbara noted that the town could make an exception for the ski area, provided that it actually re-opens. Al requested a clean draft of the chapter. Elvin suggested meeting with the resort owner to find out what they'd like to do. Chapter 10 (Housing): **Al moved to approve Chapter 10 as drafted. Elvin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.** Chapter

12 (Relationship to Local & Regional Plans): **Elvin moved to approve Chapter 12 as drafted. Al seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

5. Next meeting – The PC agreed to convene again on Thursday, November 21st at 10:00 AM to meet with representatives from the Resort and review a clean copy of the Energy chapter.
6. Minutes – September 12th: **Arthur moved the approval of the minutes of September 12th. Elvin seconded the motion, which passed with Al abstaining.**
7. Adjourn – **Arthur moved to adjourn at 11:45 AM. Al seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Harrison