

TOWN OF WOODBURY

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

DATE: May 3, 2021

Planning Commission Members Present:

Dave Barnowski, Michael Gray, Thomas "Skip" Lindsay-Chair, Jim Schweithelm, Ph.D., Michael Sadler

Conservation Commission Members Present:

Kiley Briggs; Chad Wohlers

Members of the Public Present:

Clare Rock-CVRPC (Contractor for the Planning Commission)

The virtual meeting was called to order at 6:02 P.M.

Adjustments to the Agenda: None

Act 171 Compliance Strategy

The group, led by Jim S., discussed the best way to move forward and be in compliance with the requirements mandated in Act 171, Forest Blocks and Habitat Connectors.

Enacted in 2018, compliance with Vermont Act 171 is now a requirement for Town Plan approval. Here's the hyperlink:

https://anr.vermont.gov/Planning/Forest_Blocks_And_Habitat_Connectors

Jim noted the legal requirement to be in compliance with Act 171 is that the Town Plan must include additional information represented on a future land use map and language that identifies state, regional or locally significant forest blocks and habitat connectors. These requirements will be integrated into the natural resources and land use section of the Town Plan and must include a future land use map and a natural resources map.

Jim continued, leading the discussion through an Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) recommended five (5) step Act 171 planning process. Roles and responsibilities were agreed upon and are as follows:

- Step 1-Assessment: Conservation Commission
- Step 2-Identifying Community Values and Engaging the Public:
 - Community Values Mapping Project Completed in March 2021 by the Planning and Conservation Commissions and members of the public.

- Step 3-Identify Community Goals and Policies:
 - Planning Commission
 - Conservation Commission Input
 - Public Input
- Step 4-Create a Future Land Use Map and Land Use Policies:
 - Planning Commission with input from the Conservation Commission
 - Fish and Wildlife & CVRPC assistance with GIS and map creation
- Step 5-Implementation and Action:
 - Planning Commission with input from the Conservation Commission

One of the tools at the disposal of the Planning Commission is a GIS map application produced by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources called BioFinder. Here's the hyperlink: <http://anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/BioFinder2016/>

Clare Rock led the group through a brief on-line tutorial of the application and how its use will aid the Planning and Conservation Commissioner's in their Act 171 planning efforts.

The Planning Commission members will attend the May 20, 2021 Conservation Commission meeting and further strategize Act 171 planning.

Town Plan Vision Statement:

Skip noted that he published the vision statement in the Front Porch Forum asking the public for their comments and editing suggestions via email. None were received. Dave offered a change to the text which was adopted by the Commissioners. The statement was read once more and minor grammatical adjustments to the text were offered by Michael S. and Michael G. Subsequently, Skip introduced a motion to adopt the statement; the motion was carried unanimously.

Town Plan Goals/Objectives/Actions:

Skip noted that a "draft" of the Goals/Objectives/Actions is due to the CVRPC on May 17, 2021.

Jim S. described his approach in creating the draft Town Plan Goals and Objectives document. Jim's document proposes goals and objectives and possible actions related to economic and community development, natural resources, transportation, recreation, public facilities and services, energy, housing, historic-cultural-scenic resources, and land use. Jim suggested the document be renamed the Implementation Program which is what it will become in the Town Plan. All agreed.

The Commissioners discussed and edited the Economic Development section including retaining a representative on the Central Vermont Fiber Communications Union District.

A discussion regarding cellular coverage in Woodbury ensued with Michael S. noting that if high speed broadband is deployed WiFi calling is an alternative to cellular coverage.

Michael Gray noted the he believes Woodbury will be receiving \$200K in Covid 19 relief monies.

Using social media to help attract people to settle in Woodbury was one of the possible actions under economic development. One platform, Reddit, was discussed as a possible on-line forum. The Commissioners, led by Michael S. and Michael G., voiced their concerns regarding on-line forums and chat groups focused on attracting people to Woodbury. Michael S. noted that the attractiveness and “brand” that Woodbury has and improvements brought about in the Town Plan will generate interest organically without the need for social media to attract new people.

The rest of the meeting was focused on discussing and editing the Economic Development objectives and action items.

The May 17 meeting agenda will be dedicated to editing remainder of the Implementation Plan.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 P.M.