

TOWN OF HARDWICK
PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of the Meeting
14 April 2015

Members Present: Zoning Administrator Karen Holmes, Chairman Joe Rivard, Diane Grenkow, David Gross, Ed Keene, Lisa Maskell

Members Absent: Dan Bandit, Ken Davis

Also present: Select Board member Shari Cornish

6:38 P.M. The meeting was opened by Mr. Rivard. Mr. Gross moved to approve the minutes of 02 April 2015. Mr. Rivard seconded and all approved. Mrs. Holmes announced that Ruth Carr, recording secretary, is planning to resign her post. Mrs. Holmes has suggested that the Town take advantage of the allowance provided in statute and seek to appoint an Alternate to the Planning Commission who will also serve as recording secretary. In the event that there is not a quorum, the recording secretary can then serve as a voting member. The Board agrees that Mrs. Holmes should advertise for the vacancy as stated.

Mrs. Holmes updated the Board on the status of the previous discussions regarding waiver language and the merger/subdivision of pre-existing small lots. Since discovering that there is existing language in both Statute and the Bylaws that can allow for the reasonable use of the land (i.e. a subdivision along previously existing lot lines, there will be no need to pursue an interim bylaw amendment to address the issue. Alison Low, of NVDA, has suggested that an interim bylaw amendment to include waiver language is not the type of scenario that was intended to be implemented in an interim bylaw and suggests that the Board wait and include waiver language in the full update. In light of these findings, Mrs. Holmes will reach out to the land owners affected and advise them to submit subdivision applications for review.

Mr. Rivard opened a discussion on the roles and responsibilities of the members of the Planning Commission. He would like to recommend that all Board members take some time to think about what their capacity for participation is. Recognizing that the Bylaws and the Town Plan are living documents that require constant attention from the Planning Commission it is clear that the duties of the members have increased. Ms. Grenkow stated that she is still trying to learn what the expectations are. All board

members agreed that it has been unclear and would like to see documentation that outlines what the roles and responsibilities of the various board members are. Mrs. Holmes will put together some information to that effect and have it ready for the next meeting for review. There was also discussion regarding the possibility of the Planning Commission adopting an official procedural document to guide its work in the future.

In addition, Mr. Gross suggested that it would be helpful for new board members to have a better idea of what has been accomplished in the recent past. To that end, an annual summary of minutes should be put together which highlights the actions of the Board. Mrs. Holmes will take that responsibility as well as creating a calendar of items that need annual or biannual attention.

Documents that were referenced as having an impact on how the board functions and what the interpretations on certain bylaws should be include:

Essentials of Local Land Use and Regulation. Vermont Land Use Education & Training Collaborative. May 2007. <http://www.vpic.info/Publications/Reports/Essentials/EssentialsBlackWhite.pdf>

Zoning Administrator's Handbook. Vermont Land Use Education & Training Collaborative. October 2005. <https://www.sec.state.vt.us/media/262016/zoningadministratorshandbook.pdf>

Who's Got the Power? Roles and Responsibilities in Planning and Zoning. Vermont League of Cities and Towns. <http://www.vlct.org/assets/Resource/Workshops/2014/Fall-Selectboard-Institute/Who's-Got-the-Power.pdf>

Next Steps – At the next meeting the board will work to come up with a strategy and a time-line for the priority of updating the Bylaws. Mrs. Holmes asks that the members take the next several days to think about what they need in order to accomplish that goal and she will make certain that the proper resources are provided.

Upcoming events - May 13th at 2:00pm there will be a small working group/organizational meeting with the Vermont Council on Rural Development to discuss the details and expected time-line for the Community Visit which is scheduled to take place in Hardwick at the end of the year. The Board will be updated on this at the June meeting.

The next meeting of the Planning Commission will be Tuesday, 12 May 2015 at 6:30 P.M.

8:09pm Mr. Rivard moved to adjourn and Mr. Gross seconded. All approved.