

TOWN OF WESTFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Minutes for August 5, 2009 Meeting
Approved on September 2, 2009

Commission Members Present: Mark Letorney (Chair), Patrick Haller, Jason Hoover and Seth Jensen.

Commission Members Absent: N/A

Also Present: Melissa Manka (Planning Coordinator).

The meeting began at approximately 7:03 p.m.

Joint Meeting of the Town Boards to Discuss the Draft 2009 Town Plan

The Planning Commission began by discussing their timetable for holding the Town Plan public hearing. They decided to have another joint meeting of the boards to discuss the Plan on September 16th and asked that one representative from each town board present said board's comments at the September 16th meeting.

Tony stated that the implementation plan goals and objectives should be consolidated and prioritized.

The Commission asked Melissa to discuss the required implementation plan format with the RPC.

Bob stated that the goals and objectives list more than what can be accomplished by town boards in 5 years and the timetable is unrealistic. He added that the Selectboard is backlogged with projects and the town would need more volunteers to accomplish the objectives. He also suggested that the Commission reconsider use of the terms "shall adopt", "will provide", etc. and instead consider using the terms "encourage", "promote", etc. He said if the Commission is sure that an objective will absolutely be implemented then the phrase "shall adopt" is fine to use. However, if further research is necessary to determine whether an objective should be fully implemented the phrasing should be revised.

Mark stated strong language was used in case of court appeals and Act 250 cases, which will use the Plan as a regulatory tool.

Bob said he was concerned that the Plan made too many promises.

Jason said the Plan is the backbone for creation of the land use regulations and the implementation plan mostly involves the re-write of the regulations.

Mark said that the Commission wants the Plan to be realistic and workable.

Pat agreed that the implementation section should be condensed.

The DRB agreed to review the phrasing used in the implementation section and revise the section as a whole.

Bob asked that the energy section be revised so as to consider economic feasibility as well as environmental considerations. He also stated that the town is not just promoting town trails for recreational purposes, but for access purposes as well. Therefore, the wording of sections pertaining to town trails should be checked.

Tony asked if the energy section was geared towards municipal actions or development actions.

Pat stated that the energy section is geared towards municipal actions and public education. The Commission agreed to do away with the spreadsheet look of the implementation plan. Jason asked that the header in the document include section numbers and labels.

Planning Commission Work Plan

The Commission revised their work plan to give town boards more time to comment on the draft Town Plan.

Minutes of the July 1, 2009 Meeting

Pat MOVED to approve the minutes.

Seth SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 3 – 0.

Jason abstained.

Minutes of the July 15, 2009 Meeting

Jason MOVED to approve the minutes.

Seth SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 3 – 0.

Pat abstained.

Minutes of the July 22, 2009 Meeting

Jason MOVED to approve the minutes.

Seth SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 3 – 0.

Pat abstained.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 p.m.

Submitted by,
Melissa Manka, Planning Coordinator