

CALAIS PLANNING COMMISSION (PC)

January 16, 2024 Minutes

Meeting all ZOOM on account of nasty weather

PC Members Present: Jan Ohlsson, Melanie Kehne, Gary Root, Vicki Arthur, Jarrod Weiss and John McCullough

Guests: Anne Winchester (Selectboard), Larry Bush (Conservation Commission), Kari Bradley (Town Administrator), Rebecca Treat (prospective new PC member), Paul Olander (Calais resident)

1. Convened 7:05 p.m.
2. Approved Minutes from Jan 2 with corrected spellings. McCullough to see that they are posted on Town Website.
3. Jan Ohlsson introduced Rebecca Treat to the group. Rebecca lives next to Teegan (Town Clerk). Ten-year resident. Works at Stone Environmental.
4. Jan reported that the Select Board (SB) held their Public Hearing on the proposed amendments to the *Calais Land Use and Development Regulations* (Regs). Without hearing any public dissent, the SB voted to place these amendments on the March 5th ballot for voter approval.
 - a. Jan reminded all that the entire (final) proposed language to the Regs is on the Town Website.
5. Discussed the Front Porch Forum (FPF) post by Jarrod Weiss warning the February 18th public comment session on the upcoming rewrite of the Town Plan (TP).
 - a. Gary Root and Vicki Arthur offered to do a PowerPoint (PPT) visual to go along with the PC introduction to the meeting. Vicki agreed to do the PPT, but others would provide content. (see #11)
 - i. Suggested PPT content included maps (Forest Integrity Maps?), existing TP table of contents, photos, anything that generates interest and stimulates conversation.
 - b. Gary suggested that FPF posts be updated as often as needed to maintain public interest and update on PC progress.
 - c. Jarrod will add additional content to FPF post with a means for readers to click buttons to poll their specific interests.
 - d. Kari Bradley suggested adding interesting demographic data points as an FYI.
6. Gary Root suggested building a new web page devoted to TP progress and process on the TP
 - a. Maybe web page can be on Calais Website w/ PC stuff. Gary to reach out to Sara Black who manages town website

7. Continuation of last week's discussion regarding TP
 - a. Kari suggested we present what we feel are the three biggest issues. (examples: Climate Change, Housing, Economic Development, etc.)
 - b. Kari suggested regular contact with SB just to touch base regarding TP progress
 - c. Anne Winchester said that he SB does have their own thoughts on the TP and that the Feb 18th meeting might be a good place to discuss them.
 - d. Jan said it would be good for the town to see that the PC and SB were working together on this.
 - e. Jan said it would be helpful to remind people that the TP is only worked on every eight years and that the next opportunity for town-enacted changes to the TP wouldn't be until 2032.
 - f. Anne asked if the Feb 18th meeting was for the purpose of stimulating discussion. Jarrod responded "yes", and also to hear community concerns. It is largely a meeting where the PC listens.
 - g. Melanie Kehne suggested that SB input prior to Feb 18th would be helpful to the PC.
 - h. Jan said that Feb 18th at the Town Hall may be one of several such meetings. Other venues for other meetings might be East Calais Rec Center, Adamant Community Club, Maple Corner Community Center, etc.
8. Conversation turned to the future of the Calais Elementary School.
 - a. Jan asked "what is the current thinking re: the School?"
 - b. Kari said that the actual closing of the School (if it comes to that) will be something decided by the whole town.
 - c. Anne said that the space needs of the Town Office are expanding and that the School might be used as an annex of sorts of the Town Office.
 - d. Gary suggested using the word "transition" rather than "close" when discussing the future of the School.
9. John McCullough made a pitch for unified demographic data, especially is demographics data is used to support TP recommendations.
10. Jan asked if there were any other questions or concerns.
11. Vicky Arthur (PC member tasked with managing the TP rewrite) asked that suggestions for "conversation starters", photos, etc. be sent to her.
12. March 5 is Town Meeting Day. March 12th the PC will meet to elect its officers.
13. Jarrod will do an agenda for the Feb 18th meeting. Kari will demonstrate use of the "OWL" at next PC meet, February 6.
14. Larry Bush says that the Conservation Commission (CC) will be doing its own community outreach. (Note: the CC has written the Natural Resource section for the past two TP rewrites.) He said that the State of Vermont continues to write legislation telling towns what they can and can't do with regard to environmental

planning. Example: 30% of all land conserved by year 2030, which is within the expected life of this 2024 TP rewrite.

15. Meeting adjourned around 8:20.