

Special Meeting of  
Selectboard and Planning Commission  
July 8, 2014  
*Approved*

Agenda: Central VT Regional Planning Update – Renee Carpenter; Review and discuss draft updates to Town Plan.

Present: Selectboard members Scott Bassage, Rose Pelchuck, Denise Wheeler. Clerk: Donna Fitch. Planning Commission: Jack Russell, John McCullough, Peter Brough, Jan Ohlsson, Betsy Parah. Zoning Administrator Renee Carpenter. Conservation Commission: Stephanie Kaplan. Audience: Peter Harvey, Paul Rose.

The meeting was called to order by Denise Wheeler at 7:05 pm.

#### **CVRP UPDATE**

Renee Carpenter, Calais representative to Central VT Regional Planning (CVRP) gave an update on two workshops she had attended.

- CVRP is working on the Regional Plan and is looking for volunteers from member towns.
- CVRP is excited about Calais' work on its zoning and Town Plan.
- Spring Housing Workshop: State has grants for issues mentioned in Calais Town Plan and some foundation grants are available. A housing document "Between a Rock and a Hard Place" is four years old and, when talking about affordable housing, is actually talking about middle income housing.
- Community Vitalization Workshop:
  - Calais has three village designations which have benefits for the town including tax credits. "It felt so good to represent Calais," Renee said, indicating that CVRP is impressed with Calais development of village areas as well as other initiatives. "Calais is doing everything right."
  - Municipal planning grants are available up to \$20,000. For grants over \$8,000 the town must match 30%. Deadline is Sept. 30, 2014. Transportation grants have a deadline of Aug. 31, 2014.

Stephanie Kaplan pointed out that the Conservation Commission has applied for grants for a natural resource inventory of Calais but have been turned down twice.

#### **REVIEW TOWN PLAN DRAFT**

Jack Russell passed out "Town Plan Primary Responsibilities" indicating the sections that are the responsibility of the Planning Commission and those that are the responsibility of the Selectboard. Jack explained the Town Plan is essential for obtaining grants, addressing regulatory issues, directing zoning. CVRP and the State are directing towns to include action plans, with goals that can be accomplished in five years, and they want yearly progress reports. Is this reasonable with the resources we have? The Town Plan can no longer be "put on the shelf." Jack said the Planning Commission really needs Selectboard input. The Planning Commission is concentrating on zoning.

Several draft sections were reviewed and discussed:

#### **VISION**

- The vision is looking at the town further down the road, maybe 10 years.
- Goals are what can be accomplished in 5 years.
- Rose commented on the Planning Commission's "awesomeness" considering the work they have done.
- Scott said this is the most important work being done in town.
- Stephanie asked that natural resources be added to the 10-point vision list
- Donna suggested definitions of terms be added to the end of the document.
- Peter Harvey pointed out that "development" is more than houses.

Jack handed out a "Smart Growth" document which he said has been extremely important in guiding the Planning Commission's work.

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### **NATURAL RESOURCES**

- A resource inventory is needed otherwise this section gets into territory that is not defensible.
- PC members John McCullough and Rich Quelch met with Conservation Commission. Rich is editing this section.
- There is duplication.
- Some of this section was taken from *“Conserving Vermont’s Natural Heritage A Guide to Community-Based Planning for the Conservation of Vermont’s Fish, Wildlife, and Biological Diversity.”*
- Calais new road standards should be included as an addendum.
- Cost impact on roads should be taken into consideration.
- It was decided that since the document is being edited that it would be reviewed more thoroughly at the next meeting.
- “Extraction” – identify what kind.

Jack asked for guidance from the Selectboard on the goal *“Explore the feasibility of local gravel extraction while protecting the rural character of Calais”* and the Plan of Action: *Extraction and quarrying shall be removed as a conditional use in the Rural Residential District*. Stephanie said she had come to the conclusion that

- 1) Gravel pits are an inherent conflict within the rural residential area.
- 2) One cannot live next to a gravel pit.
- 3) The natural resources section suggests identifying gravel in town and zoning that land so houses can’t be built there.

The Conservation and Planning Commission will meet on July 16 to do more work on the Natural Resources section.

### **FLOOD RESILIENCE**

- Discussed potential dam failures and the lack of disaster preparedness.
- List acronyms at the beginning of the section.
- Establish a reserve fund to build up money for flood mitigation.
- It is anticipated that laws will eventually come from the federal government not allowing building in flood plains.

### **MUNICIPAL SERVICES**

- What about wind turbines? Micro turbines?
- Discussion of electric poles along roads impacting the vegetative buffers which are if benefit to roads.
- Need a tree policy.
- Shouldn’t trees go in conservation section?
- Commercial water extracting – deleted.
- Municipal Services section will be combined with Utilities/Facilities section.

The next Town Plan review meeting will be held on Monday, August 4, 7pm, Town Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna Fitch, Town Clerk