



**Minutes for Town of Pawlet Planning Commission
Pawlet Town Office
Pawlet, VT
Monday, January 26, 2015
7:30 p.m.**

Members in Attendance:

**Eric Mach
Paul Elsholz
Wayne Clarke
Lenny Gibson
Fred Stone
Gary Baierlein**

Members Not in Attendance:

Harry Van Meter

Others in Attendance:

**Barbara Noyes Pulling, Rutland Regional Planning Commission
Gib Mach
DeAnna Mach
Darren Elliot
Keith Mason
Elizabeth Gibson
Philip Ackerman-Leist**

Item 1: Approval of Agenda

Eric called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and moved to approve the agenda. Wayne seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes, December 22, 2014

One correction was made to the minutes from the last meeting: Paul's last name is spelled "Elsholz." Eric then moved to approve the minutes and Paul seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Item 2: Comments from the Audience

Keith Mason and Gary Baierlein are working on the road part of the town plan, and Keith is looking for direction from the PPC on his input. After some discussion, Keith said he would take update the write-up from the present Town Plan. Topics to cover will include transportation (complete streets and Go! Vermont), the pedestrian safety audit, existing conditions, culverts and storm water, Champlain basin considerations. Keith also wants to improve the Class 4 section of Chet Clark Road, the only town road connecting Pawlet and West Pawlet.

Gib Mach and DeAnna Mach discussed the ongoing renovations at Mach's Market. There will be a small fresh meat market in the front, Vermont goods, general store newspapers, etc. as previously but smaller. The back will be a restaurant with seating for about 100 and a microbrewery producing craft beers. An engineer is working on the parking, three levels of parking across from post office with retaining walls. There is now a new well to meet state specs.

Hydropower will be brought back online as second phase of the project. Efficiency Vermont is involved in terms of weatherization, heating, cooling. They are also dealing with the Agency of Natural Resources, Fire Marshal's office, Agriculture Department. Pawlet DRB may need to look into change of use for restaurant, signage. Gib said he had come to the meeting mostly as a courtesy to let the PPC know what's going on.

Elizabeth was present both to take minutes and also as a member of the Pawlet Energy Group to talk about the energy section town plan and how to coordinate that process with the PPC. Wayne said that he is concerned that three-phase power be discussed in that section.

Item 3. Zoning Administrator Report

As Zoning Administrator, Eric reported that he had sent out a couple of notices regarding zoning ordinance violations that the Listers had alerted him to.

Item 4. Old Business

Barbara discussed the Town Plan and the community survey. She passed out examples of other surveys from Danby and Proctor. She recommended an online survey instrument, SurveyMonkey. After some discussion, it was agreed that a survey in Pawlet should be both digital and print, as in the Pawlet Newsletter. Barbara, Lenny and Wayne will develop the survey questions over the next two weeks for the newsletter, online version and possibly other venues such as the Town Report or to hand out at town meeting or on election day. People should be given a maximum of two weeks to complete and return the survey.

Eric asked about the timing of the public forum for the town plan, and the consensus was to have that form at the regular PPC meeting on March 23. Then during the month of April the results from both the survey and public forum could be analyzed and consolidated. Individual members of the PPC could also reach out to ongoing groups in the Town, such as the Haystack Hustlers and the volunteer fire departments.

Item 5. New Business

Fred Stone and Philip Ackerman-Leist discussed the agriculture section of the Town Plan and presented a draft version to the group. The draft discussed changes in farming over the past few decades in Pawlet, with the decline in dairy farms and the growing emphasis on other crops and "new agriculture." Philip emphasized that it's important to think in terms of the entire food production, processing and distribution system – especially the key challenges and opportunities that are inherent. It's also important that the Town Plan language be all-inclusive and broad-based. This means avoiding too much emphasis on terms like "non-GMO," "organic," etc. The plan should encourage the production of diversified products such as food and fiber while avoiding the pitfalls of gentrification, too many horse farms, etc.

Eric reported on the forum on economic development that he recently attended in Rutland and Clarendon. Education, talent, and quality of life are key components of economic development. The quality of life that Pawlet offers will draw entrepreneurs, people interested in producing diversified crops such as organic beef, dairy, chicken, sweet potatoes, etc. Eric said that 40 percent of the people working in the Rutland area are "1099" people, in that they operate independently. In Pawlet that percentage is probably even higher. Agriculture is the biggest

economic driver in Pawlet. How can we make it happen more here? How can we encourage the production of value-added products such as cheese, maple syrup, etc.?

Lenny said that it will be important to include a section in the Town Plan that discusses the developing digital world. He noted the recent introduction of fiber optic cable to all VTel customers in Pawlet. People's ability to connect to the Internet is important for advertising and publicity and would facilitate the kind of entrepreneurship that Eric had suggested, such as producers of value-added agricultural products. The Town Plan should discuss digital technology and the significance of fiber, for instance.

Eric mentioned a state project on discharge detection and elimination being managed by Jim Pease, VT Department of Environmental Conservation. The purpose is to assess and eliminate illicit discharge in the towns of Pawlet and Bennington. Hilary Solomon from the Poultney Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District will be attending the February meeting to discuss work planned for Pawlet and West Pawlet. Flower Brook, for instance, is impaired in the Pawlet Village center.

Input from the PPC for the Pawlet Town Report is due sometime this week. Lenny will pull that together, including the town plan revision, citizen participation, subdivision regulations and whatever else he gleans from reviewing the minutes of the past several months.

Item 6. Set Agenda for Next Meeting – February 23, 2015.

Approve agenda with any changes; approve minutes of January meeting; comments from the audience; zoning administrator's report; get results from RRPC representative on the pedestrian safety review performed in Pawlet last fall; prepare for town plan community forum; new business; set agenda for next meeting.

Lenny moved to adjourn at 9 p.m. All agreed.

Respectfully submitted by Elizabeth Gibson, Acting Clerk