

Minutes of Town of Pawlet Planning Commission
Public Forum
Subdivision Regulations and Unified Bylaws

Pawlet Town Offices
Monday, June 25, 2012 7:00 PM

Minutes

Members in Attendance:

Karl Eberth
Harry van Meter
Fred Stone
Gary Baierlein
Myron Waite
Tom Nelson
John Thrasher

Others in Attendance:

Eric Mach (Zoning Admin.)
Jamie Lee
Bill McKenzie
Nancy McKenzie
Janine Seitz
Steve Williams
Diann Hammond-Mason
Rebecca Cramer
Sally Brown
Nathanael Gibson
Lenny Gibson

James Glick
Theresa Jones
Mike Beecher
Gary Seitz
Barbara O’Conner
John Malcolm
Kevin Mason
Frank Nelson
Elizabeth Gibson
Thaddeus Gibson
Gene Berche

Fred Stone introduced Jamie Lee as the Rutland Regional Planning Commission Planner retained through a grant to assist the Planning Commission in the possible creation of Subdivision Regulations.

Jamie Lee presented the Public Forum:

The Municipal Planning Grant is “To explore the possibility of creating density based subdivision regulations to allow for the viable commercial and residential use of our historic village centers while protecting the natural areas, water quality and scenic resources of the Town.”

Results of the Survey - 30 Responses Received (2% of 2010 Population), 23 Submitted Online, 7 Hard Copy.

Majority of respondents chose the Pawlet Newsletter for communications, and ranked more importance to Small Town Atmosphere, Protecting Farmlands and Protecting Ridgelines, They were also more familiar with the Act 250 Processes but not the Pawlet Zoning Ordinances.

Additionally the results showed the respondent felt there was Not Enough Land Use Regulations. Full results of the survey are available in the Town Clerk's Office.

Some of the Subdivision regulations wanted by the respondents included:

- None - No cluster growth.
- No cluster of homes.
- Keep Act 250.
- Clustered housing while protecting the overall footprint for open space.
- Consistent with rural character, not allowing major commercial development.
- Regulations that don't allow large housing tract development.
- Protection of ROW, preservation of woodlands preservation of ridgelines ban on cell towers and wind turbines.
- Regulations that favor cluster development.
- Encourage cluster growth while remaining a 1 acre town.
- No subdivision regulations because in the long run the administrative costs will result in tax increases to cover administrative expenses.
- Regulations that require and encourage thoughtful approach to unit placement that reflects the rural heritage of the region.

Some of the Subdivision regulations not wanted by the respondents included:

- Condos, Townhouses.
- Please do not go to the 10 acre town plan. We don't need Dollar Stores in Pawlet - there are enough in Granville.
- Regulations that undermine Act 250.
- Becoming a 10 acre town.
- I worry about people building houses too close to mine.
- Condominiums.
- Businesses being run out of homes where not zoned for it, too many junk yards, lack of maintenance, increased enforcement.
- The kind that would also cause Pawlet to change from a 10-acre to a 1-acre town under Act 250.

Presented info concerning Act 250: 1 Acre vs. 10 Acre

- Adopting Subdivision Regulations allows a town to conduct local Act 250 review, but it does not force us to do so.
- Benson, Brandon and Manchester all choose to remain 1-Acre Towns, even though they have adopted Subdivision Regulations.
- Large Commercial development can still be approved by Act 250 in 1-acre Towns – Criterion 10 of Act 250 relies on language in a Town Plan to deter undesirable uses.

Presented items that may be reviewed in a Subdivision Hearing:

- General: Compatibility with Existing Settlement Patterns, Lot Layout, Building Envelopes and Site Visits.
- Protection of Natural Resources: Identification, Minimal Fragmentation, Infrastructure considerations, Corridor and Feature Protection.

Reasons for unifying Bylaws:

- Easier for DRB, Applicants and Public to navigate
- Streamlined, Orderly, Consolidated

- Changes in Town Plan impact both documents, easier to update

Discussed Density vs. Minimum Lot Size

Minimum Lot Size

- Indiscriminate, large lot sizes.
- Usually requires more or lengthier roads.
- Requiring large lots could exacerbate resource lands.

Density-Based

- Produces the same number of lots while conserving large, in-tact parcels.
- Seeks to conserve woodlands and farmlands.

Another Public Forum will take place in about 10 months.

The Forum was then opened to questions from the audience.

DRAFT
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Mike Beecher

James Glick
Lenny Gibson
Gene Berche

Review of Minutes from the June 4th meeting – approved.

Audience: Gene Berche discussed leasing or purchasing land (1-3 Acres) to install solar panels for group-net-metering and credits to business. Variables and feasibility of plan discussed by the Commission

Zoning Administrator Report: One Variance request for a porch.

8:30 Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,
 James Glick