

**Minutes for Town of Pawlet Planning Commission
Pawlet Town Office
Pawlet, VT
Monday, November 2014
7:30 p.m.**

Members in Attendance:

**Eric Mach
Harry van Meter
Wayne Clarke
Lenny Gibson
Fred Stone
Gary Baierlein**

Members Not in Attendance

Paul Elsholtz

Others in Attendance:

**Allen Turner
Frank Nelson
Kathy Doyle, Clerk**

Item 1: Approval of Agenda

Harry made motion to approve agenda. Wayne seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes, October 2014

Fred indicated concern that much time was spent at the last meeting on the 'housing issue' even though the planning commission has no say in the matter. Fred moved to approve the minutes and Lenny seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Item 2: Comments from the Audience

Frank asked if there would be a meeting in December. Lenny announced that Pawlet had received a municipal planning grant and he would contact Barbara Noyes Pulling from the Rutland Regional Planning Commission to see if she would come to the December meeting and to get her suggestions about getting started on the planning grant. Eric said to pencil in a meeting for December. Eric said he would let the select board know that they received a planning grant.

Eric noted that the report from Zoning Administrator is given to keep the planning commission informed. Lenny agreed that the report is useful because the planning commission may wish to make updates on zoning bylaws in the future. Wayne expressed the opinion that someone like Mr. Sasso should go to the Development Review Board not the planning commission if he requires information on a permit issue.

Item 3: Zoning Administrator Report

Harry asked for a report from the Zoning Administrator and Eric said there was nothing to report.

Item 4: Old Business:

Eric reported there is a new member of board, Paul Elsholtz, appointed by the select board, but that Paul was not able to attend the meeting.

There was a general discussion about progress on the town plan. Frank asked if Barbara Noyes Pulling would bring in relevant language from other plans. Eric noted that would be the case as the plan needs to be compatible with both the Rutland Regional plan and the plans of adjoining towns. Fred mentioned that he

has the agriculture sections from three other towns in Vermont, but that the agriculture section of adjoining towns is limited. Allen Turner said he feels there needs to be more emphasis on agriculture in the plan.

Gary noted that he had read the section on roads and would work with Keith to determine what needs to be updated.

Lenny said that population figures are available from the US Census and Barbara Noyes Pulling will be useful providing additional data. Lenny noted that some retrospective data has been lost. There was a discussion of how census data might be used in the plan. Wayne commented that census data provides median income which impacts the issue of affordable housing and land values. Lenny commented that 'affordable housing' has been addressed with the 'accessory dwelling' provision. Gary noted that many tradespeople in Pawlet depend on people with more means including those who live outside of Pawlet. Eric says 'affordable housing' is a myth in rural areas because longer driving distances impacts affordability. Allen says age structure, affordable housing and the economy are interrelated issues and the way data are analyzed and presented can be more or less informative for understanding patterns. Allen asserted that the plan should help to understand the whole picture.

Fred indicated concern with the '5 -acre lot size' since larger lots are less affordable. Eric responded that issue was addressed with the revised subdivision regulations which allow smaller lots if density is maintained in the rural areas.

Harry says energy group has not gone any further than the outline Elizabeth Gibson presented as the group is waiting for more guidance on overall structure. Harry stated that the group did an analysis on street lights and determined that 20 lights will be shut off which will save energy. There was a discussion on Residential Building energy codes. Gary mentioned that this is an area of confusion and there is a need for more education to instruct those doing construction on the specific codes which he indicated can be vague and misleading.

Eric reported that he has looked at the Granville plan, and will get something from Rupert, Wells and Danby to assess compatibility with surrounding towns. Eric commented that New York State planning is very different than Vermont.

Eric stated that new chapters will include economic development and flood resiliency. Eric said that he talked to Hilary Solomon who is doing a study of Flower Brook and is seeking funding to study phosphate loading.

Eric noted that education and childcare also need to be updated with information from the school. Lenny stated that the state has information on registered child care and the homeschool population.

Item 5. New Business:

Wayne asked what is expected for the next meeting. Eric hoped the consultant would attend the meeting. Eric suggested it would be good to bring outlines of each section to the next meeting. Eric raised the issue of citizen participation. He thinks January would be good time for a public survey.

Fred asks if Allen would be around to help with the plan. Allen replied that he would at least be available by e-mail. Allen commented that "boiler plate" language is useful for efficiency, but that there is a need for individualized information in the plan.

It was mentioned that the planning commission is still looking for a new clerk and Kathy confirmed that this was her last meeting as clerk

Fred moved to adjourn. All agreed.

Item 6: Set Agenda for Next Meeting – December, 2014.

Approve agenda with any changes; approve minutes of Nov. meeting; comments from the audience; zoning administrator's report; progress on town plan; new business; set agenda for next meeting.

Respectfully submitted by Kathy Doyle, Clerk.