



Minutes for Town of Pawlet Planning Commission
Pawlet Town Office
Pawlet, VT
Monday, January 23, 2017
7:30 p.m.

Members Attending:

Wayne Clarke
Gary Baierlein
Mark Frost
Eric Mach
Harry Van Meter
Rik Sassa

Members Absent:

Melissa LaCount

Others Attending:

Paul Elsholz, clerk
Frank Nelson, West Pawlet

Eric called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m.

Item 1: Meeting Agenda

Gary made a motion to approve the meeting agenda; Harry seconded; motion passed.

Item 2: Minutes of November 28, 2016 Meeting

Some grammatical errors were found in the draft version of the minutes. Harry made a motion to approve the corrected minutes. Mark seconded; motion passed.

Item 3: Public Comments

None

Item 4: Zoning Administrator's report

None

Item 5: Economic Development and Infrastructure Improvements

Eric said that with the election of a new governor, the state will likely push economic development. He encouraged commission members to think about infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks and storm drains. It may be useful to walk the streets and take pictures.

There was a short discussion about water. Hardness, sulfur, arsenic and radon affect the water quality in the area.

Wayne said that we need to find a balance that promotes industry while preserving the pastoral landscape. Eric said that we should focus on our strength: fertile, well-drained agricultural land.

Wayne asked about the Planning Commission's obligations in these matters. Eric said the PPC needs to outline a series of recommendations to the Select Board by next fall.

Other considerations that may affect Pawlet's economic development strategies include:

- the available labor force
- the market for vacation homes/Airbnb type housing
- the need for a traffic study
- an assessment of local housing conditions
- the market for craft beer
- the market for wool products
- the potential for orchards: apples, pears, peaches, . . . (including "you pick" for tourists).

It would be helpful for to get some guidance from an expert; an outsider who has experience doing economic development in rural areas would be ideal. Eric intends to ask Greg Cox, the president of the Rutland Area Farm and Food Link (RAFFL), if he would be willing to speak to the Commission. Gary suggested that Lyman Ortan of the Vermont Country Store would be very knowledgeable. Phillip Ackerman-Leist, a professor at Green Mountain College who teaches sustainable agriculture, would be another excellent choice.

Item 6. Next Meeting

Lyle Jepson of the Rutland Economic Development Corporation will to address a joint meeting of the Select Board and Planning Commission on January 31st at 7:00 pm.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission will be on February 27, 2017. The agenda is: 1) approve agenda 2) approve minutes 3) public comments 4) zoning administrator's report 5) economic development and infrastructure improvements 6) set agenda for next meeting.

Harry moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 PM; meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Paul Elsholz