

Minutes for Town of Pawlet Planning Commission
Pawlet Town Office
Pawlet, VT
Monday, June 23 , 2014
7:30 p.m.

Members in Attendance:

John Thrasher
Wayne Clarke
Gary Baierlein
Fred Stone
Harry van Meter

Members Not in Attendance

Eric Mach
Lenny Gibson
Harry van Meter

Others in Attendance:

Paul Elsholz
Frank Nelson
Kathy Doyle, Clerk
Kathy Doyle, Clerk

Item 1: Approval of Minutes, May 2014

Minutes unanimously accepted as written.

Item 2: Comments from the Audience

Paul Elsholz stated that he was looking to better understand the role of the Planning Commission and the Select Board. John referred him to the Vermont Planning Information Center (VPIC) website. Kathy mentioned that the Vermont League of Cities and Towns website also may have information. John noted that the charge of the Planning Commission was to develop a town plan and draft ordinances related to land use.

Frank Nelson commented on the potential increased importance of agriculture, especially small farms, to the Vermont economy in light of the impact of the potential loss of jobs at places like IBM.

Item 3: Zoning Administrator Report

No zoning Administrators Report.

Item 4: New Business:

John Thrasher mentioned that Kathy Doyle was invited to present a proposal for updating the natural resources section of the town plan. Kathy handed out a one-page proposal that described an approach to compile existing information from multiple sources on mapped natural features in town including: ecologically significant natural communities; wetlands; vernal pools; potential wildlife corridors; forested habitat blocks; wildlife habitat; rare, threatened and endangered species; conservation land; and

tiered contribution of natural resources to biodiversity. Map layers of known elements would be drafted for inclusion in the town plan and natural features would be described and assessed as to their local and regional significance. Threats to natural features would be documented and goals and strategies for conservation would be proposed. Areas that would warrant further field investigation would be identified for a future phase II assessment. Kathy noted that she had completed a similar assessment for the upper Poultney watershed for the Poultney Mettowee NRC and contributed to a natural heritage inventory for the town of Mount Holly. The proposed project would focus on compiling existing information, not an extensive field survey which might be done in a future phase II assessment. John Thrasher stated that this type of information could be valuable for helping to evaluate the potential impact of proposed projects and he would follow up on this after examining several potential grant possibilities.

John also mentioned that if anyone wished to receive mailings from the Rutland Regional Planning Commission he had forms available to complete.

Item 5: Old Business -- Determine who will take the lead on various sections of the plan.

Wayne mentioned that he was interested in energy, but felt that since Harry was on the Energy Committee, Harry and the committee might take the lead on that section. John asked if Wayne would be willing to draft action items for various sections of the plan to carry out the town vision. Wayne agreed. John asked if Fred would be interested in working to strengthen the agricultural portion of the plan. Fred said he had asked Don Campbell for examples of town plans with strong agricultural sections and he had obtained copies of the Cornwall, Randolph and Shoreham plans to consider. Fred agreed to work with Philip Ackermann-Leist on coming up with ideas to update the agricultural section.

John asked Gary if he might work with Keith Mason to discuss ideas for the transportation and infrastructure section of the plan. John mentioned that Lenny said he was interested, if funding was available, to edit the plan to make it a cohesive document and Lenny may also be able to update the census data. John thought Eric might be able to focus on regional issues and compatibility of the plan with surrounding towns. John mentioned that Kathy Doyle might work on the natural and scenic resources section. Wayne asked if Harry might work on the housing section and John noted that that section does not need much work. John said he was willing to work on information that does not get picked up by others.

Gary asked about a schedule. John noted that there are a few grant deadlines in September and that the overall goal was to complete the plan by August 2015. Kathy asked who completes the final maps for the plan. John was not certain, but mentioned the town has a contract where digital data is uploaded to the town's online mapping program once per year. Paul Elsholz said he had expertise in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and might be able to help with creating maps. Wayne said he would ask the Pawlet Historical Society about completing a map of known historic sites.

Item 6: Set Agenda for Next Meeting:

Approval of Minutes, June 2014; Comments from the Audience; Zoning Administrator Report; New Business; Old Business -- discuss with Eric, Larry and Harry about their contributions to the plan; Set Agenda for Next Meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.