

**Minutes for Town of Pawlet Planning Commission**  
**Pawlet Town Office**  
**Pawlet, VT**  
**Monday, October 27, 2014**  
**7:30 p.m.**

**Members in Attendance:**

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

**Members Not in Attendance**

**Gary Baierlein**

**Others in Attendance:**

**Rick Sassa**  
**Allen Turner**  
**Frank Nelson**  
**Keith Mason**  
**Kathy Doyle, Clerk**

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**Item 1: Approval of Agenda**

Harry motion to approve agenda. Wayne 2<sup>nd</sup>. Passed unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes, August 2014**

Wayne motion to approve minutes. Harry 2<sup>nd</sup>. Passed unanimously.

**Item 2: Comments from the Audience**

Allen Turner said he was present because he was interested in the town plan process. Eric announced that the application for a municipal planning grant was submitted and the planning commission would learn in December whether or not they received funding. Rick Sassa requested clarification on the regulations regarding short term rental of his house located within the agriculture and forest zone. He noted that he offers no services and pays taxes. He commented that due to lack of employment the rental of his home provides a viable opportunity and guests support the local economy as they frequent other business establishments in town. A discussion ensued about the regulations regarding rentals. Harry made a motion to dismiss the issue. Eric stated that if enforcement is an issue it is the Zoning Administrator's call. Lenny says apartment dwelling are permitted based on state law and there is no prohibition against renting one's home. Lenny seconded Harry's motion. All agreed unanimously to dismiss the issue. Eric commented that as zoning administrator he would ask guidance from the select board. Lenny commented that as there is no basis, Eric need not respond to the complaint. Fred said he thought the issue was ridiculous. Eric determined that since no law has been broken no action was needed and Rick was 'okay'.

**Item 3: Zoning Administrator Report**

Lenny stated as a 'point of order', Harry, the vice chair should take the Zoning administrator's report. Harry commenced leading the meeting for the report. Eric said that town Listers were finding buildings without building permits. Eric noted that two parties without permits have come in and gotten permits. Eric stated that as long as the applicants meet building requirements, the permit fee can be doubled. He noted that if someone builds who does not meet the requirements they would have to take the building down. Eric also noted that the Development Review Board issued a permit for kennel.

Eric presented draft applications for subdivision permits that he will take to the select board meeting the next evening. Eric mentioned that he seldom has an application for a subdivision. Wayne asked if the forms matched the unified bylaws. Eric suggested that board members take the draft application forms home and discuss the issue later. Harry asked if the forms must meet the approval of the planning commission. Eric said he would go back through bylaws to see if these forms are consistent with the unified bylaws. Harry asked if unified bylaws are now in effect. Eric said he thought they were, but noted that he has not checked the website. Lenny suggested that the forms be checked with John Thrasher to make sure they were consistent with unified bylaws. Lenny also noted that a developer would have to submit supporting documentation and it would be a good idea to list all the materials required.

Harry questioned if Northeast Solar project is in compliance with the application they submitted? Eric says the permit for the solar development came from the Public Service Board not the town. Wayne stated that he believes there needs to be clear language in the plan regarding town's position on such development. Eric noted that Rutland town has done this and Eric would get that language.

#### **Item 4: New Business**

Kathy announced that she would only be serving as Clerk through the end of November. Lenny stated that he would post a notice of vacancy.

#### **Item 5: Old Business – Review town plan; invite anyone interested in filling Planning Commission vacancy to the meeting; make recommendation to Select Board regarding the vacancy.**

Two people: Paul Elsholtz and Melissa Hyatt expressed interest in filling the vacant seat on the Planning Commission and both applications will go to select board for a decision. Eric said he has no preference and proposed leaving the issue up to the select board but requested input from the PC. Fred expressed the opinion that if someone has shown an interest they need not put in a resume, but one only needed to indicate that they would like to serve and why. Lenny stated that he would like to recommend to the select board that Paul looks like a good applicant based on his training including GIS experience. Harry questioned if there was any information on the qualifications of the other applicant? It was noted that she works as a landscaper. Lenny make a motion to recommend Paul Elsholtz. Fred seconded the motion. The motion passed without opposition. Wayne stated that he believed that someone's pedigree does not necessarily determine someone's ability to do a good job.

There was a discussion on what needed to be done on the plan. Kathy noted that the board could refer to the June 2014 minutes to determine what was discussed about who might work on what sections of the plan. Fred stated he had not heard from Philip Ackermann-Leist so he would ask if anyone else might be willing to help write the agriculture section of the plan. Lenny says someone from the Regional Planning Commission could help put ideas together. Fred says he would like town input. Kathy suggested that when Philip came to the meeting last spring (April 2014) he identified issues to include and these were included in the minutes of that meeting. Eric suggested that India and Andy Farmer might be interested in helping with the Agriculture section of the plan. Fred commented that he thought some farmers did not want anything to do with the government. Allen Turner says the town plan can protect citizens if they are at the table.

Wayne noted that the PC had ten months to complete the plan. Eric reminded the board that they would learn in December about funding. Harry asked what would be done if the Planning Commission did not receive the planning grant. Eric mentioned that some money (couple thousand dollars) was available in his budget to get started. Lenny said he felt it was likely the town would receive the grant. Lenny said the board could use the previous plan as a template. Eric noted that they needed to add information on flood resilience, economic development, energy including something about siting energy development, and suggested the Pawlet plan could be informed by looking at the plans from other towns. Eric stated that he felt land use and resources had not changed, but there was a need to update information on conserved

properties. Eric stated that the plan might want to say something about flooding, flood resilience and the location of the village in flood plain. There was a discussion about transportation and potential upgrades to class 4 roads. Fred questioned the benefit of upgrading any class 4 roads. Frank commented that giving up the road is an option. Keith noted that Chet Clark Road serves as a connector between West Pawlet and Pawlet if route 30 is out. Lenny stated that using slate quarry piles would be a way to both upgrade roads and improve West Pawlet by getting rid of slate piles. On the issue of education and child care, Lenny mentioned the need to survey child care providers and that this might be done by a paid consultant. Harry stated that a new member might join the Commission in November and they should think about what the new person might do. Lenny suggested that the PC wait until December when they might have funding for a consultant to help with the plan.

Eric reported that he did a walk in October with the Regional Planning Commission and AARP to complete a 'health impacts study'.

Allen Turner expressed the opinion that it would be beneficial if pieces of the plan could be brought up as early as possible so that more people might become involved in the planning process. He stated that a more participatory "section-by-section review" of the plan would be good. Frank suggested that it would be good to put something together for the town meeting in March. Eric agreed that the town meeting comes at good time for participation. Frank suggested using the previous town plan as a template to start the discussion. Lenny moved to adjourn. All agreed. Kathy requested information on the agenda for the next meeting which Eric provided.

**Item 6: Set Agenda for Next Meeting – November 24, 2014.**

Approve agenda with any changes; approve minutes of past meeting; comments from the audience; zoning administrator's report; old business – announce new member of board; new business; set agenda for next meeting.

Respectfully submitted by Kathy Doyle, Clerk.