

**PLANNING COMMISSION  
TOWN OF PAWLET  
Monday November 26th, 2018, 7:30 pm**

**Members present:**

RIK SASSA  
HARRY VAN METER  
ERIC MACH  
MARK FROST  
WAYNE CLARKE  
GARY BAIERLEIN  
MELISSA LACOUNT

**Members absent:**

NONE

**Others attending:**

HAL WILKINS-ZONING ADMINISTRATOR, ROBERT FALVO, SONJA FALVO, MICHELLE TILANDER, RAY DUQUETTE SR., BETH M. DUQUETTE, ANNE HADEKA, MIKE BEECHER, JOHN DAVIS, VALERIE DAVIS, PAUL TILLANDER, FRANK NELSON, ANTHONY TRAFICANTI, LARRY LESLIE, DAVID WEAVER (ORTON FAMILY FOUNDATION).

**1. Call to order**

Harry Van Meter called the meeting to order at 7:30pm

**2. Approval of Agenda Items - Review/Add/Delete**

Rik Sassa added an update from Mettowee Makers to Public Comments. Gary Baierlein and Melissa LaCount invited David Weaver to give a presentation regarding the Orton Family Foundation. Harry added in New Business a quick executive session at end. Eric Mach moved to approve agenda, Mark Frost seconded motion. Motion passed.

**3. Approval of minutes of previous meeting**

Correction under Adjournment, next meeting is November 26<sup>th</sup> not December. Gary Baierlein moved to approve the minutes, Melissa LaCount seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**4. Public Comments:**

Rik Sassa updated the commission regarding Mettowee Makers, since Lauryn Axelrod was not able to attend the meeting. Mettowee Makers applied for and received their status as a marketing cooperative with the state. Also, the Holiday Market is scheduled for Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> at Mach's Store location. There will be over 25 vendors present. Frank Nelson spoke about a more advanced and efficient wood pellet stove. Ray Duquette had Rik read from the Pawlet By-laws relating to enforcement of zoning. Ray pointed out that the only individual named in the By-laws to carry out enforcement is the zoning administrator. Ray then demanded that the zoning administrator enforce the

By-laws regarding the tactical shooting range on Briar Hill Rd. Eric Mach claimed that Ray had a grudge against Mr. Banyai (owner of property in question). Ray strongly refuted Eric's claims. Michelle Tillander said that she did not like what was happening in the neighborhood. She said that she has no beef personally with Mr. Banyai. Anthony Traficanti is still waiting to hear from a few different state entities regarding his planned hemp processing center in the old Leslie Iron Works location. He spoke about, if the purchase goes through (dependent on his getting his permits), that he is planning on painting two of the buildings, grading the area, and cleaning up some of the clutter (equipment left by a neighboring farm). Harry Van Meter asked him what type of equipment he planned on needing there. Anthony said, perhaps an excavator for grading.

**5. Zoning Administrator's report:**

Hal Wilkins handed out a spread sheet to the commissioners regarding a listing of zoning permits that he has been working with lately. Hal is going to change his schedule for when he will be in the office. After the following Monday, he will firm up the actual hours.

**6. Proposed Bylaws revision:**

No proposed revisions discussed.

**7. Economic Development Work Plan:**

David Weaver from the Orton Family Foundation gave a presentation explaining how the foundation helps Communities create their own individual development model. He called the initiative, Community Heart and Soul. The foundation does not charge for their service and does not offer grants either. Their role is to help towns figure out what will work best for the individual town and really impresses the notion that towns need to invest in this transformation process if they hope it to succeed. A process of a few years is required to go through steps that identify problems or barriers in the town and its inhabitants, identify the strengths, a rigorous outreach effort to all community members, and eventual implementation of decided plans. Harry asked the community present what their impressions of Heart and Soul were. Michelle Tillander spoke about coming to the town of Pawlet and that getting together as a community makes a big difference. Harry Van Meter echoed a similar feeling of attachment to the town. John Davis offered that a private enterprise in our town is tearing the heart and soul out of the town. After his 43 years of living in town, one thing can ruin that delicate connected feeling. John felt that everyone is passing the buck on the issue of the shooting range in West Pawlet. Harry Van Meter asked David, "how do we know if Heart and Soul is right for us?" David said that some people could be assigned to Pawlet, that have worked with other towns dealing with similar issues and whether it worked or didn't work for them. Beth M. Duquette asked how do we get guidance. Essex is the nearest town that has done Heart and Soul. David said that he would connect a woman from that program with Pawlet. Frank Nelson asked about the population base focus. David said 45,000 is the perceived

limit. Towns from 75 people to 35,000 across the country have gone through the process. Wayne Clarke asked specifically about our tow, with two centers, agricultural base, a mountain between the towns, and roughly 1400 people. David said that there are some other towns with similar situations that he can put us in contact with.

**8. New business:**

Harry Van Meter wanted to start an Economic Development Committee. Wayne Clarke, Mark Frost, Gabe Russo, and Frank Nelson all expressed interest in being on the committee. Harry was hoping that Lauryn Axelrod would be interested in being on the committee as well. Harry also extended an invitation to someone in the community to be on it as well. David will send relevant information about Heart and Soul to Harry. Wayne spoke a little about Act 171 which regards woodlots and how forest patches can be connected or are already connected as a wildlife corridor. Harry brought up that the Pawlet Library Strategic Committee would like to meet with the board next meeting at 6pm (so an early meeting planned for Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>)

**9. Adjournment:**

Ray Duquette apologized to all present for his earlier outburst. He affirmed that he takes his responsibilities seriously as spokesman for the Briar Hill Group. Gary Baierlein, offered as a response, his personal experience of being up against the board on a zoning issue regarding his business. He spoke about the litigious atmosphere we all live in now a days and that the board is not passing the buck on this issue. The proper procedure must be followed, or committing an illegal response could result.

Executive session was postponed until next meeting.

Eric Mach made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Wayne Clarke seconded, the motion passed and meeting was adjourned at 9:11pm. Next meeting of the Pawlet Planning Commission is December 17th. It will start at 6:00pm to accommodate a meeting with the Library Strategic Committee. After that meeting, it will follow the above agenda.

Respectfully submitted by Rik Sassa, secretary.