

**Minutes for Town of Pawlet Planning Commission
Pawlet Town Office
Pawlet, VT
Monday, February 25th, 2019
7:30 p.m.**

Members Attending:

**Rik Sassa
Wayne Clarke
Mark Frost
Melissa LaCount
Gary Baierlein**

Members Absent

**Harry Van Meter
Eric Mach**

Others Attending:

Frank Nelson, John Davis, Paul Tilander, Michelle Tilander, Valerie Davis, Ray Duquette Sr., Eli Norman, Ken Norman, Hal Wilkins- zoning administrator

Item 1: Call to Order

Rik Sassa called the meeting to order at 7:34p.m.

Item 2: Approval of Agenda Items -Review/Add/Delete

Since Harry Van Meter (chairman) and Eric Mach (Vice chairman) were not present item #5 Zoning Administrator's Report, item #7 Town By-laws update and revisions, and item #8 New Business, will not be discussed at tonight's meeting. Rik Sassa made a motion to approve the agenda, Mark Frost seconded, motion passed.

Item 3: Approval of January 28th minutes

Rik Sassa made a motion to approve the minutes, Mark Frost seconded, motion passed.

Item 4: Public Comments

Frank Nelson noted that he had Fish and Game Club raffle tickets. Frank also wanted to know if any movement had occurred on the Economic Development Committee. No new developments. Ray Duquette wanted to comment on a By-law issue, but since the commission will not be discussing By-laws tonight, he postponed his question. Frank was wondering if an

issue that was brought up in the past regarding the town's designation (from a ten acre town to a one acre town) has moved forward. The commissioners were uncertain of the actual designation. Ray said that he had spoken to Bill Burke from the state, and was told that Pawlet is regarded as a one acre town. Frank felt that John Thrasher (town legal representative) should follow up and send the necessary information to the state. Hal Wilkins offered to ask John about the issue. Ray had a question whether the DRB can have a hearing without a variance first. Hal said the DRB met in executive session recently. They will schedule a public hearing on the 28th of March, which will be warned in the paper, etc. Frank thought someone from the planning commission should ask for participation in the Economic Development Committee during the town meeting discussion the night before the town meeting vote.

Item 5: Zoning Administrator's Report

postponed

Item 6. Economic Development Sub-Committee Report

Discussion on Economic Development postponed. Wayne Clarke gave an introduction to Act 171. He referenced the state booklet for communities to address protection of forest blocks and habitat connectors. The intent is to limit forest fragmentation and impacts on animal habitats, watersheds, drainage, etc.. Since this act is mandated, it must be incorporated into the future town By-laws. Hal said we will have to customize this act into our particular area. Frank was worried that this new template might be a form of eminent domain, since it may affect property values and such. Hal said that it is more heavily enacted in the ski area towns to protect bear habitats. Hal said there will be a speaker from the state with a presentation that will explain this in more detail to the interested public. Hal also said, there are advanced energy regulations, flood plain changes, as well as other things that will have to be incorporated into the By-laws. Wayne encouraged the community to get copies of Act 171 and understand this new state mandate. Hal read a comment on form based coding. The University of Michigan said that form based codes for rural areas are of no benefit. Hal had talked with the previous zoning administrator and the phrase "less is more" came up a lot. In order to preserve the rural character of Vermont, broader laws and allowing the DRB to make variance decisions seems to be the proper direction. Ray mentioned that no enforcement has occurred on the Banyai property since it was determined that it was in violation, Rik clarified that the state only remanded the decision back to the town in the last month and a half. Some of the town's people present felt frustrated that John Thrasher was not on top of this issue. Hal mentioned that MHG Solar project, a 500 KW project on 192 Warren Switch Rd, doesn't fall under Act 250 designation. They want a letter of support from the Selectboard. They will most likely be able to do it even without support.

Item 7. Town of Pawlet By-laws Updates

postponed

Item 8. New Business

postponed

Item 9. Adjournment

Rik Sassa moved to adjourn the meeting, Wayne Clarke seconded, motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:48pm

Next meeting is March 25th, 2019. Agenda for meeting as follows: Meeting agenda, Minutes from last meeting, Public comments, Zoning administrator's report, Economic Development Committee report, town of Pawlet By-laws update, new business, adjournment..

Respectfully submitted by Rik Sassa, Secretary.