

Town of Pawlet
Planning Commission Meeting
Monday, May 22, 2023 7:30pm
Meeting at townhall and
via Zoom platform

Members present:

Jessica Van Oort, Chairperson
John Sabotka, Vice Chairperson
Rik Sassa, Clerk/Secretary
Frank Nelson
Gary Baierlein
Mark Frost
Harley Cudney
Wayne Clark (alternate member)
Ed Bove (RRPC)
Nancy Morlino, Pawlet Zoning Administrator

Also present at meeting:

Jennifer Sullivan

Members absent:

Gary Baierlein

Item 1. Call to Order:

Jessica called the meeting to order at 7:35pm

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

Jessica added to the agenda some discussion on short term rentals.

Item 3. Approval of minutes of previous meeting:

Rik Sassa moved to approve the minutes and Harley Cudney seconded, all approved.

Item 4. Zoning Administrator's Report- Nancy Morlino:

Nancy Morlino said there were two additional permits since last meeting. She attended a meeting for Rutland town on short term rentals. She explained that many towns around are trying to register short term rentals in the towns. The primary reason for doing anything was safety (fire code, number of occupants, contact numbers, etc..) Dorset has hired a consultant to help draft requirements for their zoning by-laws. One stipulation they are considering is requiring the host be on the property for a certain amount of time out of each year to discourage out of state interest in short term rentals as purely a business. Rik gave an overview of his ten years experience in short term rentals. He explained that currently in the Vermont state Supreme Court's eyes, short term rentals are seen as fundamentally no different as owner occupation and therefore are not subject to any additional requirements like long term rentals where the tenant is the only occupant. Jennifer Sullivan (health officer) discussed how she is most often called in when there is a problem. Nancy was suggesting that the board might want to require more stringent safety requirements, perhaps a walk through to see if requirements have been met. Jessica commented that she sees some difference between a local resident renting out their home short term as opposed to people out of state renting out property for the sole purpose of short term rentals. Jessica felt the commission has now dipped its feet into the waters of the short term rental issue and would revisit it at a later time.

Item 5. Rutland Regional Commission Report- John Sabotka and Harley Cudney:

John gave a report on the meetings that he attended. He attended the board of commissioners meeting in which the new regional plan was discussed. There was a regional meeting that covered the solar field in Pittsford. The development team has yet to bring it before the Pittsford Planning Commission. Harley said that Representative Robin Chestnut Tangerman said that millions of dollars would soon be coming to the community at large.

Item 6. Otter Creek Communications Union District Report and Municipal Planning Grant Report- Jessica Van Oort:

Jessica reported that very little has happened since the last meeting.

Item 7. Public Comments:

Ed Bove spoke about the town plan that will be due early Feb. 2024. He was saying that a warning would have to be sent out by December this year. He thought, therefore that it would be a good idea for the Commission to make a plan to work on the plan. He thought very little needs to be altered (one piece that would need to be added was Act 171, as well as some data updating in other areas would be required). Jessica wondered if this would be a good time to add our enhanced energy plan. Ed said no since the state has yet to provide the requirements needed. Ed said that the town already has an energy plan that meets the old requirements. When the town meets the requirements for an enhanced energy plan then the town would

have “substantial deference”, which could be more powerful. Ed said the golden rule in a town plan is that if you want to protect something then you have to call it out very specifically. Ed explained how we could get very specific with our energy plan without having an enhanced energy plan (which adds a lot of volume to a town plan). Ed was commenting on how the town plan might want to read in a way that implants a vision for the future, rather than getting bogged down in too many details. Frank felt that the town plan needs to be visionary and the detail can come in the by-laws. Wayne Clarke spoke about when the last town plan was composed. He felt that the idea at the time was to maintain the rural agricultural nature of the town. Jessica suggested that all the commissioners should read the current town plan so that we can more speedily have things ready for the December warning deadline. Ed suggested: look through the language and cut out extraneous stuff, tighten up the vision and make sure the goals are in line with the commission’s values, and correct any out dated material. Jessica said that after all the commissioners do a read through of the town plan then the commissioners will dissect the town plan in sections then two commissioners addressing each section to speed things along.

Item 8. On-going Business:

No other on-going business was discussed.

Item 9. Set Agenda for next meeting

Call to Order 7:30 2. Approval of Agenda Items - Review/Add/Delete 7:31 3. Approval of minutes of previous meeting 7:33 4. Zoning Administrator’s Report – Nancy Morlino 7:35 5. Rutland Regional Planning Commission Report 7:40 6. Otter Creek Communications Union District Report and Municipal Planning Grant report 7:45 7. Public Comments 7:50 8. On-going Business: Bylaws Updates continued as well as further discussion of Town Plan 8:00 9. Set Agenda for the next meeting 8:55 10. Adjournment 9:00

Item 11. Adjournment:

Mark Frost motioned for adjournment and Harley seconded all approved. Meeting adjourned at 9:03pm.

Respectfully submitted by Rik Sassa, Secretary/Clerk