

WEST WINDSOR PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes

June 2, 2009

Present: Barbara Truex, Glenn Seward, Hal Pyke, Joe D'Anna, Mark Isenberg, Joelle Greenland, April Harkness, Martha Harrison

1. Call to Order: Vice Chair Barbara Truex called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM.
2. Changes or Additions: Revision of draft subdivision regulations – The Planning Commission discussed a change to Article 2.1(C) of the draft subdivision regulations to make it consistent with the zoning regulations. **Glenn moved to approve the revised wording of Section 2.1(C). Joe seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**
3. West Windsor Town Plan – Energy chapter: Joelle said she has given Martha a packet of information on energy. Joelle said the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) is urging towns to appoint Energy Coordinators or Energy Committees to improve their chances of getting grant funding for energy projects. Joelle gave the PC information about the roles and responsibilities of Energy Coordinators. Joelle also gave the PC information on the energy issues that town plans are required to address. Joelle encouraged the PC to look at the goals, policies and recommendations of the Regional Plan, which is on line, to make sure that the Town Plan is not in conflict. Joelle suggested letting the Selectboard know that they have the authority to appoint an Energy Coordinator. Joelle said the PC needs to determine what the residents of West Windsor will accept in terms of energy initiatives. For instance, Joelle said, some towns are now putting wind turbines on existing cell towers. Using Weathersfield as an example, Joelle pointed out that energy initiatives can be very cost effective. There was brief discussion about the use of wood chip boilers in schools and municipal buildings. Joelle said www.vecan.net is a good resource for energy information, including the Town Energy and Climate Action Guide, which provides a model town energy plan. Joelle urged the PC to think about the energy aspects of transportation and resort growth. Barbara asked if the Energy Coordinator would write the Energy chapter of the Town Plan. Joelle said s/he could, or s/he could work with Martha, who is going to be the master writer. Barbara asked if anyone is doing anything with geothermal energy. Joelle said geothermal is very expensive. Martha said there is a local resident who installed a geothermal heat pump. Joelle suggested that the PC focus its attention on the energy elements that are required in a town plan and let an energy committee take it from there. Joelle said there are people who have experience with and information about getting off the grid. The PC talked about some of the local residents who have a lot of information on alternative energy and conservation. Joelle said Mt. Ascutney is the only place where there could be utility-scale wind. The PC agreed to mention to the Selectboard that they are authorized to appoint an Energy Coordinator and to indicate that they would be in favor of such action. The PC reviewed the roles and responsibilities of the Energy Coordinator. Martha suggested trying to gauge if there is enough interest for an Energy Committee. There was some question about whether the Selectboard can appoint a Coordinator or whether the town has to authorize the Selectboard to appoint a Coordinator. Joelle said, according to 10 V.S.A. §1131, the Selectboard can appoint a Coordinator. Joelle said the Energy Coordinator may also be an ex-officio member of the PC. April mentioned that the June issue of VLCT News indicates that if residential-scale wind turbines are net-metered, the Public Service Board regulates the facility and the municipal board is pre-empted. Joelle said there is legislation in the works that, if it passes, will prohibit municipalities from creating zoning ordinances that restrict alternative energy. Glenn suggested that the PC send the Selectboard a letter indicating their interest in having a town Energy Coordinator. April and Joelle offered to draft the letter for the PC. Joelle said energy issues affect many other elements of the town plan including natural resources, transportation, housing and land use. Town Plan Timeline: April reviewed the timeline with the PC and the suggested format for the public forums. Hal reminded everyone to keep JAM

Golf in mind when reviewing the town plan. April and Joelle suggested some speakers for the various forums. Joelle said since Martha's going to do most of the writing, the PC should use the RPC as a source of information and statistics. April noted that the Conservation Commission sent the PC a list of concerns, some of which are relevant to the town plan. April suggested inviting the Conservation Commission to the PC's meetings. Hal asked April for a copy of the RPC's evaluation form. The PC agreed to schedule the first public forum on Tuesday, July 21st at 7:00 PM and to schedule the second public forum for Wednesday, October 7th at 7:00 PM. The PC agreed that the main focus of the third forum on Economic Development should be the Resort and the Commercial/Industrial district. Joelle noted that West Windsor's current town plan has policies and recommendations, but no goals. Martha suggested defining what the PC hopes to learn from the housing and natural resource forum. Hal said it might be useful to review the minutes from the public hearings on the zoning bylaws. Joelle urged the PC not to overlook the implementation chapter of the Town Plan. There was brief discussion about the need for senior housing or assisted living in West Windsor. Barbara suggested that the Town Plan could have as one of its goals assessing the need for such housing. Barbara asked how many local people are employed by the ski area and the resort and whether it's seen as a major employer. Hal said no. Hal said the employment issue relates to the housing issue. Hal said Reading has a lot of land owned by a few people and they are running out of volunteer firefighters, town employees, and so on, and their school is likely to close in the next few years. Barbara said if the Resort is planning to develop 50 new units per year, there might be an incentive for them to build some workforce housing. Joelle said in some cities it is mandatory that a certain percentage of each subdivision has to be "affordable." Joelle said the definition of "affordable" varies depending on the average salary for the region. Joelle and April agreed to line up the speakers for the July 21st public forum.

4. Approve Minutes - April 14, 2009 (joint meeting w/DRB): **Barbara made a motion to approve the minutes of April 14, 2009 as written. Glenn seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. May 20, 2009: Barbara made a motion to approve the minutes of May 20, 2009, as amended, which passed unanimously.**
5. Review report on proposed subdivision regulations – Martha noted that the report should specify that the proposal is to establish subdivision regulations for the town, since what the town has now is not what the state would consider subdivision regulations. **Glenn made a motion to approve the report with the addition of the suggested sentence. Barbara seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**
6. Other Business – PC Appointment: Hal asked Mark if, after experiencing a typical meeting, he is still interested in being appointed to the PC. Mark said yes. Hal agreed to recommend Mark to the Selectboard at their next meeting. Schedule public hearing: The PC agreed to schedule the public hearing on the subdivision regulations for Friday, June 26th at 6:30 PM.
7. Adjourn – **Glenn made a motion to adjourn at 9:03 PM, which passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Harrison