

## WEST WINDSOR PLANNING COMMISSION

Draft Minutes  
October 23, 2012

Present: Hal Pyke, Elvin Kaplan, Al Keiller, Mark Isenberg, Jason Rasmussen, Martha Harrison

1. Call to Order – Planning Commission Chair Hal Pyke called the meeting to order at 6:38 PM.
2. Changes or Additions – None
3. Public Comment – None
4. SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & threats) Analysis re: Economic Development in West Windsor – Hal said we should pick reasonable things to start with to attract others to participate. Elvin said we should not try to do it all at once; we should pick one thing and do it correctly, and build on that. Mark agreed that we should find something achievable and get started. Mark was concerned about a lack of leadership. Al said we need to articulate our economic development goal. There was discussion about population size and diversity, local jobs, and community vitality. Al suggested reviewing and agreeing on the town's strengths and weaknesses, and then defining an economic development vision for the town for the next 10 years. The PC agreed on the following strengths: proximity to interstate highway; scenic beauty; Mt. Ascutney; town forest; existing resort infrastructure; trail networks; school/school choice; excellent access to health care facilities; proximity to GMHA; and the General Store. For weaknesses, the PC agreed on the following: internet/cell phone access; closed ski area; lack of village wastewater system; aging population; VT sales tax; stagnant real estate market; few local jobs; limited number of businesses & consumers to support them; loss of identity; and resistance to change. The PC considered the following to be opportunities: grants; underutilized town resources (town hall, school gym, library, trail network); Vermont 50 & 100 (lodging & dining opportunities); 2013 VT Mountain Bike Festival (opportunity to promote trail network); purchase of resort sewer line (opportunity to develop village); expansion of trail network (to increase attractiveness of West Windsor as a destination); promotion of events (caveat: no budget for this); collaboration with neighboring towns; website; existing ski infrastructure (alternative uses); and the talc plant property. Threats include: loss of Mile Long Field; diminished real estate values; loss of school; closure of General Store; closure of Post Office; perception of a town in decline; and deterioration of ski area infrastructure. During the SWOT, there was discussion and disagreement about whether people in general, and the high number of seasonal residents in particular, constitute a strength or a weakness. Brainstorming a vision for the future of West Windsor resulted in the following ideas: outdoor recreation mecca; involved residents; vibrant community; growing, younger population; retirement housing destination; incubator for small high-tech businesses; scenic, rural community; double size of school enrollment; sewer system in village; two restaurants; bar; B&B; bike/sports equipment shop; financially secure, expanded General Store; expanded agriculture; and a local farmer's market. Jason said he will compile the results of tonight's SWOT. Mark said he doesn't think the tenuous nature of Mile Long Field should be a roadblock to the promotion of the trail system. Jason said the survey indicated a lack of understanding of the importance of Mile Long Field, which suggests a need for education. Jason added that if the town is going to transition from "a ski town" to a destination for recreation, including the trail network, you have to preserve what you already have through easements, for example. Mark agreed. Al offered to take a shot at a vision statement.
5. Adjourn – **The PC adjourned by consensus at 8:25 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Harrison