

**MINUTES OF THE SHAFTSBURY PLANNING BOARD
OCTOBER 28, 2008
COLE HALL
SHAFTSBURY, VERMONT**

Board Present: **Bill Pennebaker, Norm St. Onge, Craig Bruder (Chairman), Chris Williams**

Board Absent: **Bob Carter**

Others Present: **Susan Swasta (Recording Secretary)**

1. Call Meeting to Order:

Chairman Craig Bruder called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

2. Old Business:

A. Working Session on Updates to Town Plan

Chairman Craig Bruder reviewed progress on the Town Plan revision. He stated that Select Board Chairman Lon McClintock's suggestions have been discussed and incorporated. They are still waiting to hear back from him, and from Cinda Morse of the Economic Development Committee (EDC) and Tracey Galle of the Recreation Committee regarding any further revisions. The section on water-related resources submitted by Josh Gorman of the Agency of Natural Resources Water Quality Division will be added after cutting and revising.

Chris Williams said he had sent the information on schools to Chairman Bruder, who has not yet looked at it. Mr. Williams said that School Board Chairwoman Betty Benedict had given him enrollment and budget figures and will also send him demographic projections. He said that she felt the treatment of education in the Town Plan is skimpy.

Mr. Williams said that they might add wording recommending better integration between the school and the Town, and they might also consider recommending that schools need to maintain a certain size to remain viable. There was discussion of the Shaftsbury and North Bennington school situation. Ms. Benedict's figures will be used as the basis of any recommendations to be added.

Mr. Williams asked where they are in terms of pulling the revision together, and Chairman Bruder replied that they are still waiting for a big piece from Jim Sullivan of the Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC). This should be ready by the end of next week. They are also waiting for input from Ms. Galle of the Recreation Committee. Then they will put it all together and hold a public hearing.

Mr. Williams asked if the revised Town Plan reflects the day to day issues in Shaftsbury. He noted the declining participation in Town government, and said he is not sure what to recommend regarding this issue. Chairman Bruder said that they could recommend active participation by community members. Mr. Williams suggested that they could say something about statewide control of school taxes diminishing control by local school boards.

Bill Pennebaker stated that there is no mention of government structure in the Town Plan. Mr. Williams said that the township is too small a governing unit for the twenty-first century, but Vermonters are hugely resistant to regional government. He asked if they could say something significant about this in the Town Plan, Chairman Bruder suggested that they might make a few statements and get people thinking about it.

Mr. Williams asked if they should recommend unified governance at the Southern Vermont Supervisory

Union (SVSU) level, noting that there are so many boards that administration is fragmented and difficult. He asked if they should recommend consolidation of North Bennington and Shaftsbury. There was discussion of the inefficiency of the current school structure.

Norm St. Onge noted that they have about a month to get the document together. He said that feedback from the Select Board and EDC had been minor, and that they can easily plug in the information from Gorman, Sullivan and the Recreation Committee. He suggested that they get the Plan done and out there, and move on to other things, rather than taking up new issues. Chairman Bruder agreed that they should incorporate the input already received or expected and move on. He asked if they could do justice to the new things discussed tonight in the time they have left. After further discussion, all agreed that it makes sense not to take up new topics, but to pull together what they have and submit it to the Select Board.

Mr. St. Onge will have updates incorporated by next week so that they will be able to read through the entire revised Plan at the next meeting. Mr. Williams stated that the only place they still have work to do is the schools section. He will get the rest of the information from Ms. Benedict.

Mr. St. Onge said that Mr. Sullivan has suggested that they look at the North Bennington Town Plan because it is an approved plan. Bob Carter had noted that the North Bennington plan reads like a narrative, and had considered this style to be preferable. Mr. Pennebaker said he thinks it is just a style issue. Mr. St. Onge noted that the Shaftsbury Town Plan has much more detail. Chairman Bruder said that they can add maps and pictures to make the document more eye-friendly.

Chairman Bruder said that he will follow up with Mr. Sullivan and with the Recreation Committee. Mr. Pennebaker stated that he gave a copy of the Plan to Norm Gronning of the Historical Society, and he will follow up with Mr. Gronning. Chairman Bruder said that they will have all the remaining information gathered for the next meeting.

3. Other Business:

Chairman Bruder asked what information they need to give the Town Auditors for the Town Report. Mr. Pennebaker said they usually give them a couple of paragraphs covering what happened in the past year. Chairman Bruder said he will ask Mr. Carter to write something up. Chairman Bruder reported that the Select Board wants to pursue a planning grant for a Town facilities study. He said that he gave Town Administrator Aaron Chrostowsky Planning Commission approval to pursue the grant.

4. Minutes:

October 21, 2008 Minutes

Mr. Pennebaker made motion to approve the October 21, 2008 minutes. Mr. St. Onge seconded.

The following correction to the October 21, 2008 minutes was requested:

In section 3A (Working Session on Updates to Town Plan), paragraph ten, at the end of the first sentence "theirs" is changed to "the draft plan."

Motion to approve the October 21, 2008 minutes as amended carried 3-0-1. (Mr. Williams abstained because he had not attended that meeting.)

October 14, 2008 Minutes

The October 14 minutes have not yet been submitted.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Swasta