

Shaftsbury Planning Commission
Shaftsbury Town Hall
61 Buck Hill Road

June 9, 2015

1. The meeting was called to order at 7 pm. Present were Chris Williams, Bill Pennebaker, and David Spurr. Abigail Beck was absent. Zoning administrator (ZA) Shelly Stiles took the minutes.
2. The 5/26/15 minutes were reviewed. The Commission noted and the ZA agreed that the minutes were somewhat casual, with abbreviations and unexplained acronyms. They were nonetheless accepted by a 3-0 vote and were signed by Mr. Williams.

3. Forestry issues:

The commission discussed the draft letter to Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) Commissioner Michael Snyder. Changes were suggested: "silviculture" was misspelled, and the phrase should read "conversion at the town level." Mr. Williams will send the letter to Commissioner Snyder. The Commission will follow up in 4-6 weeks or so.

The commission discussed just how to phrase a potential bylaw limiting land clearing for development (it should be a subsection of 7.2, Natural Resources). Limit maximum acreage? Percent existing tree cover? Establish a period of time during which it cannot be subdivided or sold (but by then the horse is out of the barn)? The commission doesn't want to discourage conversion to agricultural land. At issue is the intent of the property owner – which can't be known. And even if that owner acts with good intentions, the next ones might not. What about a carrot approach for lots large enough to take advantage of the open space subdivision bylaw? The commission will explore what other communities have done, and may speak with Paul Gillies who seems to have an interest in trees.

As for requiring UVA enrollees to treat invasives, there will be a mighty push back. Mr. Pennebaker suggested a rationale: UVA owners receive tax breaks that are subsidized by their neighbors. Their neighbors can rightly expect them to be good stewards of their land, and to keep invasives off neighboring properties. Mr. Williams will ask Ms. Beck to craft possible language regarding invasives. Mr. Spurr suggested the bylaw make it a requirement for UVA enrollees but recommend invasives management for all landowners, to help get the problem out in the public eye. The issue should also be referenced in the next Plan, where, perhaps, a list of invasives can be placed.

Town forest: the commission will try to arrange to visit the site with Kyle Mason in the fall.

4. Sign ordinance
Mr. Williams suggested cutting 3.8.2 re illuminated signs and moving it to an appropriate location in 3.1, Prohibited Signs. Mr. Pennebaker moved to accept this change; Mr. Spurr

seconded. The motion passed 3-0. Mr. Williams will write up the draft changes and make a formal presentation to the Select Board.

5. Other business

Mr. Pennebaker shared an email from Ned Swanberg re updating the model flood hazard template. The new model ordinance (the one Shaftsbury hopes to incorporate in its bylaw to make the Town eligible for full State cost share assistance) won't be done until maybe 2016, and any intermediate steps offer no benefits to the Town.

6. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.