

Shaftsbury Planning Commission
October 22, 2019

The meeting came to order at 6:05 pm. Present were commissioners Chris Williams (chair), Mike Foley (a few minutes late), Naomi Miller, and Mike Cichanowski. Also present was zoning administrator Shelly Stiles.

Ms. Miller moved to adopt the October 8 minutes. Mr. Cichanowski seconded, which passed 3-0-0.

In adopting the draft Plan, the Select Board made significant changes to the document. The Commission discussed those changes. Mr. Williams expressed disgruntlement with the State's top down approach to town planning. Mr. Foley said he was disturbed by the extent of the changes made, especially to the energy chapter (where most of the actions were deleted) and especially when the Select Board chair was present at most of the meetings on the plan. Ms. Miller noted that the required report is to reference only the extent to which the Plan still meets state goals. Mr. Cichanowski noted the Select Board can indeed do what it wishes, and suggested the Commission has two possible routes: send a report to the Board expressing disagreement with the changes, or send a report disclaiming responsibility for stating the Plan still meets State goals and suggesting that finding instead be left to the regional commission. Mr. Foley suggested adding a statement that the actions outlined in the original energy chapter are important, that the Town is going to have to face those things in the next eight years. Mr. Williams will draft a report for PC review.

The PC returned to reviewing the original action items to learn what they mean for the PC work load in the near future.

- Ms. Miller will work on connections between forest blocks.
- Perhaps we could invite floodplain manager John Broker-Campbell back to talk with the group about river corridors regulations as they would take shape in Shaftsbury, not in general.
- Ms. Miller wondered whether a town committee might be formed to address facilities at serious risk of flood damage. Mr. Williams thought that was a responsibility of the Emergency Management committee. Mr. Cichanowski said the responsibilities of the PC are to write town plans, write bylaws, and do studies. Mr. Foley said perhaps we could search out and quantify the weakest links, e.g. the electrical substation next to Paulins. What would the next step then be?
- The bylaw and zoning map have been recently reviewed.
- Some possible land uses are not referenced in the bylaw – kennels, slaughterhouses.
- The commission was uncertain whether open space subdivisions should ever be required. Perhaps the bylaw should have an “escape clause” for those sites that aren't suited to open space subdivisions. Mr. Williams thought the PC could review the subdivision regulations to look for contradictions with the bylaw.
- Access to the town forest was discussed. The only apparent access is via a ROW owned by GMNF off West Mountain Rd. Mr. Williams said the next step was securing funding from the Select Board to pay our attorneys to explore the issue.

The meeting adjourned at 8 pm. Notes by ZA Stiles.