

Shaftsbury Planning Commission
November 26, 2019

The meeting came to order at 6:05 p.m. Present were commissioners Chris Williams (chair), Mike Foley, Naomi Miller, and Mike Cichanowski.

Mr. Foley moved to approve the October 22 minutes. Ms. Miller seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

PC report on Town Plan for Select Board

Commissioners reviewed Mr. Williams's draft report. After much discussion, it was agreed that Mr. Williams would amend the report to state

- 1) the Town should regulate new gravel pits to ensure that reclamation of the pits is pursued;
- 2) we are in a climate emergency, the challenge of our times. The Town Plan should recognize that and seriously address it. Tasking the energy committee with educating the public about renewable energy is an empty gesture as the committee is not an official Town committee. The Town should either make the committee an official Town committee, and/or amend the zoning administrator's job description to include distributing information and organizing workshops to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency;
- 3) the Planning Commission accepts the standards listed as "known" or primary constraints enumerated in the BCRC energy plan and referenced in the draft Town Plan, with the exception of prime agricultural soils. A statement should be added to the Energy section that the Planning Commission wishes to impose no further restrictions on solar development than those required by State law.

The Commission also discussed reviewing requests for letters of support from solar developers, such as one outstanding from Green Lantern Solar. Mr. Williams thought the Commission should be more proactive in reviewing such proposals. Mr. Cichanowski suggested that if the PC were to indicate it might deny support for any proposal, citizens would increasingly clamor for the Commission to say "no" to future requests for letters of support.

Mr. Williams will revise the report. Members of the Commission will attend the December 2 Plan hearing to share their thoughts on the draft plan.

Permitting kennels in town

All agreed that the matter needed to be addressed. (It isn't about any outstanding applications or inquiries, but instead about allowing a service that residents need.) Mr. Miler will explore the zoning bylaws of neighboring towns to learn how they handle the issue.

Expanding the Roadside Commercial district

At present, the RC district extends north on Route 7A to West Mountain Road on the west and Tunic Road on the east. Yet there are three motels, an orchard farmstand, and the handful of businesses located at 7A and Hidden Valley Road outside the RC district. The Select Board has asked the PC whether the district should be extended northward to Hidden Valley Road.

It appears that such an act would nearly double the size of the existing zone. Commissioners discussed whether it made more sense to extend the zone southward, to Bennington's existing commercial zone, and perhaps create a new zone near the existing VC zone next to the Bennington town line. The Commission will continue the discussion at a later date.

The meeting adjourned by acclamation at 8:30 p.m.

Notes by ZA Stiles.