

## Shaftsbury Planning Commission

June 22, 2021

### Call to order

The meeting came to order at 6:06 p.m. Present remotely via the Zoom platform were commissioners Chris Williams (chair), Martha Cornwell, and Mike Foley. Ms. Miller arrived via Zoom at 6:25 p.m. Also present, in person at Cole Hall, was zoning administrator Shelly Stiles.

### Minutes

Mr. Foley moved to approve the June 8 minutes. Mr. Williams seconded the motion, which passed 3-0-0.

### Wastewater in the Village

Members of the commission attended the Select Board meeting the previous evening to learn from them whether the selectmen were willing to consider using ARPA funds to construct a wastewater system to serve S. Shaftsbury. Ms. Cornwell said they got an answer: the Select Board wants the ARPA money to go toward phase one of the replacement of the village water mains. Mr. Williams said he'd pointed out that the Board had been willing to bond the project before ARPA, and that it would benefit only about 305 families. Mr. Williams was confused by how ARPA funds were to be transferred from town to water department. Ms. Cornwell was glad to hear that, should future funds be available, a wastewater system isn't off the table. Ms. Miller agreed. Mr. Foley thought this Select Board would never approve a wastewater system.

Mr. Williams will email the board to ask for clarification:

Will the community as a whole vote on using the ARPA funds for the water project?

Will all townfolk or just the subscribers pay for future costs of the water project?

### Impacts of Rural Development

Ms. Miller said she didn't prepare for the discussion as she thought she wouldn't be present. Mr. Williams gave an overview of change in the town since 1956, when he moved here – where lean times were more common than boom times, and development consisted largely of Paran Acres, Hidden Valley, White Farm Lane, TAM, and Dailey's. He said he'd be reluctant to try to plan for a future that didn't resemble the past.

Ms. Miller reminded the board of her experience in Orange County, NY, where development changed the face of the landscape nearly overnight. She said she'd suggested the following for discussion because it is in the town plan:

#### REDUCING IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENT

- The Town should encourage compact development where soil, topography, and other site conditions permit. Use Maps 4.1 and 4.2 (Terrestrial and Aquatic Systems) and (Rare Species and Natural Communities) when reviewing development proposals to minimize or avoid impacts, forest fragmentation and the creation of barriers for movement of species.
- The Planning Commission should consider proposing a bylaw authorizing the Development Review Board to require developers to implement an open space design when failure to do so would result in one or more of the following: 1. A significant reduction in the agricultural use potential of the land; 2. Degradation of the natural visual appeal of a hillside, ridgeline, or open field; 3. Encroachment upon an important natural or historic area, wildlife habitat, or a stream, wetland, vernal pool, or other water body; 4. Elimination of access to an important recreational resource; 5.

Allowing excessive erosion, ground or surface water contamination, or otherwise endangering environmental quality. 6. Fragmentation of a significant forest resource

She noted that required open space subdivisions could reduce salability, and might be a hard sell for voters.

Mr. Foley said most of the development is single lot by single lot, and isn't upzoning the answer to that problem? Mr. Williams said ordinary citizens won't vote for going from one to twenty-five acre zoning. Ms. Miller said they might vote to go to five acres.

Other high priority tasks from the plan for Ms. Miller were groundwater mapping, mapping forest connectivity blocks, and gravel extraction.

Ms. Stiles will send a summary of conversations with the state geologist's office re groundwater mapping, maps of forest blocks and connections, and the Vermont Conservation Design report.

These four items will be placed on the next agenda.

Ms. Cornwell considered high priority creating links to local food sources on our website, encouraging Casella to collect food scraps, inventorying all trails, including on private lands, in town and thinking about how to make them publicly accessible. Ms. Miller said we might think of who the large landowners are, and maybe someday come up with a strategy of outreach toward them. Ms. Stiles will share information from the local food network on local growers, and on the BC Solid Waste Alliance. Mr. Williams mentioned a hold harmless landowner liability law. Ms. Stiles will share that information.

#### **Next meeting**

Mr. Williams and Mr. Foley will share their high priority items at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.