

## Shaftsbury Planning Commission

August 24, 2021

### Call to order

The hybrid meeting, both in person and via Zoom, came to order at 6 p.m. Present were commissioners Martha Cornwell (vice-chair), Mike Foley, and Naomi Miller; and zoning administrator Shelly Stiles.

### Outstanding minutes

Because Ms. Miller was not present for the August 10 meeting, Mr. Foley made a motion to table approval to the next meeting. Ms. Miller seconded the motion, which passed 3-0-0.

### Addressing PC priorities in the Town Plan

Ms. Cornwell introduced the discussion. She said her goal for the evening was to agree as to which of the priorities we can accomplish and when, and what would be the timeline for each. Ms. Stiles said that if some priorities will require amending the bylaw, her best guess as to when those amendments should be ready to go before the public for hearings would be October. That should allow the PC time to get the changes on the ballot by late January 2022, when the ballot will go to the printers.

The group went through each commissioner's priorities in turn.

**Ms. Miller** said the following priority would be a *short term* goal. She said she would hope to propose on the March 2022 ballot 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.

There is an open space subdivision bylaw already on the books, which could be fairly easily amended.

Ms. Miller said mapping forest connectivity blocks might be a *medium term* project. Ms. Cornwell noted that, according to a presentation on the state's conservation design program given on August 19 and available at GNAT TV, much of this work has already been done. BCRC, however, is interested in following up on the presentation.

Ms. Stiles described how she thought a project to map groundwater would proceed. First, the state geologist's office would conduct an overview survey of some kind to generally located groundwater resources. Then, the town would seek funding to hire a consultant to fine-tune the state's report and come up with protection recommendations. Ms. Miller thought this priority should be a long-term one, as it would take such a long time. Mr. Foley wondered what mechanisms would be used to protect groundwater resources once mapped. ZA Stiles will follow up on the question with the state geologist's office and her ZA colleagues around the state. Ms. Miller said her priority to restore existing as well as future gravel pits could be a very hot button topic for the voters and should be *postponed*.

**Ms. Cornwell** said she will try to create language regarding local food sources for placing on the website in the *short term*. ZA Stiles will share the list of local food suppliers she created for Ms. Cornwell with all PC members.

Ms. Cornwell said she discussed food scrap recycling with Michael Batchner of the BCRC and the Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance (BCSWA). She learned that Casella already collects food wastes from businesses, schools, and apartment complexes with four or more apartments. She said the BCSWA's website had a lot of excellent information, which could be turned into a pamphlet for those especially interested in food waste recycling. Mr. Foley said a Casella worker at Sunderland said Casella breaks open each garbage bag, to sort the contents, so maybe organics thrown in the garbage are already being sequestered. Mr. Foley says he thinks the issue is instead enforcement; he has seen businesses throw out food wastes with their other trash. Ms. Cornwell said representatives David Durfee and Kathleen James are working on legislation to reduce waste by making packaging the producer's responsibility. Food waste recycling is a *medium term* priority for Ms. Cornwell.

Ms. Cornwell said her priority to inventory all trails should be *postponed*.

**Mr. Foley** said he liked the idea putting information about Efficiency Vermont on a signboard to be placed on 7A at Buck Hill.

Mr. Foley put in a call to the Town Administrator about a bike path on 7A, which will be rebuilt in the near future.

Mr. Foley thought we should put out a sign on Route 7A at Buck Hill Road directing travelers to Howard Park. ZA Stiles will send him contact information for the Vtrans District 1 technician, who may be able to help with information on how to apply for such a sign.

Mr. Foley will review information sent out regarding permit amendments and lead the discussion of it at the next meeting. ZA Stiles will send that information out again.

**Mr. Williams** hopes to revise the subdivision regulations. ZA Stiles will ask Jim Sullivan at BCRC if he might join us in late October to discuss how we might do that without the help of a Municipal Planning Grant (MPG).

### **Scheduling action plan items**

ZA Stiles will send out the schedule for revising bylaw language.

### **Updates on outstanding PC projects**

ZA Stiles said review of the boundary line adjustment and kennel bylaw is stalled in the town attorney's office. There are no other outstanding projects.

### **Discussion of meeting agendas**

The September 14 agenda will include the open space bylaw discussion, a discussion of Ms. Cornwell's proposed local foods language for posting on the website, and a discussion of allow the ZA to sign off on permit amendments.

Hereafter, each agenda item will be identified as its short term, midterm, long term status.

Hereafter, each meeting will include an update on outstanding items.

Hereafter, Ms. Cornwell will craft the agenda and share it with Mr. Williams and Ms. Stiles two weeks before the meeting.

Ms. Miller moved to enter a trial, four meetings long, in which each agenda item will be assigned a time limit. Mr. Foley seconded the motion, which passed 3-0-0. Ms. Stiles will be the timekeeper.

### **Other business as required.**

Ms. Stiles will look into how we might use this year's MPG program to help with her short term priority item. Rationale? Covid has greatly increased the development pressures in the town.

Mr. Foley moved to adjourn at about 7:15 p.m. Ms. Miller seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Notes by ZA Stiles