

Shaftsbury Planning Commission

Wednesday March 22, 2023

In person at Cole Hall and remotely via Zoom

1) Call to order

The meeting came to order at 6 p.m. Present were commissioners Chris Williams (chair), Mike Foley, Nancy Burns, Martha Cornwell, and Naomi Miller. Also present was BCRC senior planner Janet Hurley and zoning administrator Shelly Stiles.

2) Mr. Williams suggested and all agreed that the commissioners move to “other business” on the agenda so citizens could speak on the proposed solar project.

Ken Harrington spoke. Ms. Hurley suggested that he needn't worry that, were the project approved, solar developers would flock to the town, because the Planning Commission would have in the meantime adopted an enhanced energy plan which would limit future solar development.

Kit Ausschnitt spoke. Ms. Miller responded.

Michael Albus spoke.

3) Approval of minutes

Mr. Foley moved to approve the February 28 minutes. Ms. Miller seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.

4) PC reorganization

Mr. Williams said he would not entertain a motion to continue as chair, that it was time to move on. Ms. Cornwell nominated Ms. Miller as chair. Ms. Burns seconded the motion. Mr. Foley thanked Mr. Williams for his years of service. The motion passed 4-0-1, with Ms. Miller abstaining.

Ms. Miller nominated Ms. Cornwell to be vice-chair. Ms. Burns seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-1, with Ms. Cornwell abstaining. Mr. Foley thanked Ms. Miller and Ms. Cornwell for taking on their new responsibilities.

5) Bylaw modernization, review of possible changes to promote housing

Ms. Hurley led the group in a discussion of several suggestions made regarding updating the bylaw. She noted that because the voters approved the “tiny house” and ADU changes, the town would not have to pay the \$900 match otherwise required for the grant funding BCRC's efforts.

Possible changes discussed included:

- Adopting a customary home occupation bylaw that requires no permit
- Consider reducing minimum parking requirements for residential uses.
- Consider removing conditional use requirement for mixed uses when all uses are permitted in the district. The Shaftsbury Country Store was raised as an example of why this should not happen.
- Consider reducing lot width and increasing allowable residential density in the VR. Commission members wondered what the ramifications would be, if any. Ms. Hurley noted that if the town wanted its future to resemble its past in terms of its village layout it should ensure the bylaws would make that happen.

- Relocating the Adaptive Reuse provision currently in Section 4.2.3 to a standalone subsection of Section 8 and relocating the Conditional Use and Site Plan review procedures to Section 9.

The commission will discuss these suggestions after individually diving deep into the bylaw at the next meeting on April 26 and again on May 10.

6) Enhanced energy plan process

BCRC will finish its analysis of the town's energy needs by May 30. The commission will meet to review those data on May 31. A meeting to present the data to the public will be held, tentatively, on June 7, depending in part on whether the school is available then.

7) Other business continued.

Ms. Miller asked about a putative "glamping site" on East Road. Ms. Stiles explained that she and others had met personally with the owner and that the web site is a kind of prank. The family proposes only to build two tent platforms there, for its use only. Ms. Stiles will ask the owner to take the website down.

Next meetings: April 26 (to discuss bylaw modernization); May 10 (ditto), May 31 (enhanced energy plan analysis), June 7 (tentative – presentation of analysis)

Ms. Burns moved to adjourn at 7:45 p.m. Mr. Williams seconded the motion, which passed by acclamation.