

Shaftsbury
Planning Commission
Cole Hall at Buck Hill Road
June 28, 2011

Members Present: Chris Williams (Chair), Norm St. Onge, Bill Pennebaker, David Spurr

Others Present: Art Whitman (Economic Development Committee), Suzanne Bushee (Zoning Administrator), Bob Whitney (Recording Clerk)

1. Call to Order: This meeting of the Shaftsbury Planning Commission was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Planning Commission Chair Chris Williams.

2. Approval of Minutes: June 14, 2011. David made a motion to approve the Minutes and Bill seconded. After a short discussion, the Minutes were approved as amended 3-0-1 (Norm was absent at that meeting).

3. Old Business:

a. Expansion of Village Residential District - Discussion with Art Whitman of Economic Development Committee about sewers

Art Whitman testified before the Planning Commission to provide information and answer questions about sewers. Bill explained the concept of expansion of the village residential district and the importance of water to that expansion. Art was then asked for pertinent information he had about sewers in relation to expansion. Art began by giving some history. In 2003 the Economic Development Committee (ED) commissioned a report by Stone & Philips that did a study on options of what the town could do about sewers. The report outlined five options. The options ranged from creating cluster sewer systems to laying a pipe from Shaftsbury to North Bennington and connecting to the system there. The latter seemed to be the most feasible with a cost of \$1.8 million. The University of Vermont conducted a survey of residents and received a good response rate. The results of the survey indicated that residents did not want to spend the money for a sewer system. Art continued by saying that nothing further was done. Jim Sullivan of BCRC recommended that another Economic Development Strategy Plan be done and Art said that money may be available at the end of the year to conduct another survey. Art said there is no doubt that the Town of Shaftsbury is hindered from expanding or improving until there is an adequate sewer system. David estimated, based on conversations with Joe Hermann and Art

Whitman, that an expansion of public water and sewer could run to a cost of \$3.5 million. Art said that the North Bennington sewer system may have to expand to accommodate any expansion in Shaftsbury. Looking to the future Art said that a change in State rules that affect present septic systems would help Shaftsbury expansion. Art also mentioned that a State Department of Corrections Work Camp, considered for the Industrial/Commercial District on Airport Road, would require a sewer system that Shaftsbury could possibly tap into in exchange for land for the camp. Art continued by saying that either the State will force the town to have a sewer system or a work camp type situation develops to enable a sewer system. Art feels that once a sewer system is available there will be pressure to increase density of the Village Residential District. Bill and Art agreed that a central sewer system would be the best solution.

In another subject, Bill asked Art about his concerns with the sign ordinance. Art replied that the Economic Development Committee is concerned with the "one size fits all" regulation. He thinks that a commercially zoned business should have more flexibility with signs than a home based business.

Art was thanked for his input and for taking the time to appear before the Commission.

Bill said that perhaps something should be inserted into the Town Plan indicating that density can be increased with public water and sewer availability. Chris asked his fellow Commission members how Art's information impacted a proposed bylaw for expansion of the VR District. Chris suggested that the Town consider a central sewer system tied into the North Bennington system. David said that density can be increased with a public sewer system. Chris said that expansion of public water is a "far stretch" that would require a Town vote and perhaps a bond. Bill said that the cost could be borne by the developer of the land. Chris suggested a bylaw revision that could become part of present bylaw 4.2 and that language is needed to take to the Select Board. David volunteered to get draft language together for the next meeting.

B. Affordable Housing bylaw

A rehash of affordable housing language ensued. Chris will call his contact at VHFA to find out more about their guidelines for affordable housing. He thought he may be able to get a VHFA representative to talk before the Planning Commission.

4. New Business:

a. Transient lodging in VR district (and possibly others)

There was no time to discuss this agenda item. It will be continued at a future meeting.

5. Other Business:

Norm St. Onge tendered his resignation to Chair Chris Williams. Chris thanked him for his service on the Commission and to the Town of Shaftsbury.

Zoning Administrator Suzanne Bushee will also be leaving when a replacement can be found. Chris asked her to update the Commission on what issues are out there that the Commission should be aware of. The proposed composting facility was the major issue, Suzanne said. She also pointed out that some zoning maps were inaccurate or incorrect. Paulins and Hale Mountain still have not resolved. Suzanne spoke about violations that were issued. Chris asked Suzanne to put aside the incorrect maps and mentioned that Jim Henderson of the BCRC could assist her in getting correct maps.

6. Adjourn: Bill made a motion to adjourn at 9:06 p.m. and David seconded, approved 4-0-0. The meeting of the Shaftsbury Planning Commission was adjourned until the next meeting on July 12, 2011.

**Respectfully submitted,
Bob Whitney**