

Shaftsbury Planning Commission
August 14, 2018

The meeting came to order at 7:03 pm. Present were commissioners Chris Williams (chair), Mike Foley, and Mike Cichanowski. Also present was zoning administrator Shelly Stiles.

Mr. Foley moved to approve the July 24, 2018 minutes. Mr. Cichanowski seconded the motion, which passed 3-0-0.

Municipal Planning Grant.

The commission agreed that the application should 1) emphasize the goal of building social capital, and 2) reference the PC's recent actions to improve the economic development climate in the town, including developing bylaw language allowing short term rentals; developing bylaw language to allow boarding house-like housing for the working population; the Country Store study; and bylaw revisions which reduced ambiguity regarding some uses (as in introducing a "permitted with site plan review" category). These are all bottom-up kinds of enhancements.

Town Plan, chapter 8:

General comments: many projects referred to as "recent" or as planned are now old or in the works or completed (e.g. the sidewalk, the town garage).

- Recommendation 4: Single access should be encouraged for commercial development as well, not just residential.
- Recommendation 8: make it more specific, perhaps add "create trail head parking."
- Regarding discussion of salt: seek input from Select Board or new DPW head.
- Recommendation 6: there are other programs available now. Our recent contracting with VLCT will also provide a great many more training opportunities.
- Mention Green Mountain Express. Mr. Foley's children routinely use the bus to return home from after-school activities. It is reliable, flexible, and only \$1.
- Mention electric vehicles and perhaps make a statement encouraging the placing of a charge station at Cole Hall or elsewhere.
- Mr. Cichanowski suggested incorporating language about how the Town should strive to send less money, e.g. transportation dollars, out of the county. Perhaps this discussion belongs in the energy section.
- Reference a VTrans recommendation that a bike lane be constructed on Route 7A and describe the linkages it could create (Howard Park to Robert Frost to Friends of Lake Paran to Fund for N. Bennington lands to Bennington College to Ninja Trail to downtown Bennington and south).
- Should we mention BATS? Mr. Foley noted that biking is an economic development matter too, but bike access must be safe.

Short term rentals as a Home Occupation

Mr. Williams presented draft language. (The text is incorporated in these minutes.) Changes were made and agreed upon, including that all zones except FR would be included. Mr. Cichanowski wondered if a statement of intent might be included in the language to the effect that the DRB should show deference to the rights of neighboring properties. The language re primitive camping exempts the Town from regulating such amenities. (These could include an Airstream, but not an RV.)

Mr. Williams noted the campground issue is at this time poorly covered by the bylaw. Perhaps it could be an issue for future consideration.

Mr. Williams noted that the proposed language would in fact permit up to four short term rental units on any property – the primary and accessory dwelling units, and two additional home occupation units.

Mr. Williams said he will incorporate the changes, write an introductory memo, and share the language with the Select Board. Creating bylaw language will come later. The “frame?” The proposed bylaw sees the phenomenon not as a threat but as an opportunity for the grass roots to derive income from their property.

Other business

Mr. Williams said perhaps the trail issue should be revisited. The PC must convince the Select Board that a one-time investment of funds to create trail head parking for the town forest and to create a destination feature (a sculpture park, views) on it is a worthwhile one.

The commission agreed to invite our floodplain manager, John Broker-Campbell, to visit us to talk about adopting a river corridor plan.

The commission discussed who it might interview for information for the Town Plan: businesses could be profiled, eg Brian Lent, Trevor Mance, Bob Paulin; the town’s new head of DPW; school principal; emergency management coordinator; someone from the housing sector; Andrew Knafel; the county forester Kyle Mason; Jim McGinnis at Water. PC members should probably go to them (individually, not as a commission) rather than ask them to come to the PC.

There will be no meeting on August 28.

The meeting adjourned by acclamation at 8:40 p.m.

Notes by ZA Stiles.