

February 2, 2017

PC Members Present: Jean Vissering (Chair), Julie Potter, Ray Stout, Jack Pauly, Norman Hill, Jay Stewart, Scott Hess

Others Present: Kristi Flynn (Recording Clerk), Gene Troia, Art Chickering, Bruce Howland, Charles Johnson, Ross Hazel, Renee Carpenter, Brian Luznik

Call to order: 7:00pm

Changes to Agenda – None

Public Comment – None

Discussion with Conservation Fund Advisory Committee: Town's Land Conservation Program: Process, Evaluation Criteria, PC Projects, and Potential Coordination between PC and CFAC

The Chair read a bit about the Conservation Fund Advisory Committee (CFAC) and the role in the Town Plan. The CFAC noted that goal #5 came from a discussion at Town Meeting regarding conservation versus development. The projects are reviewed by the group's Policy and Procedures guidelines. Nothing in the guidelines state how the CFAC works with other boards in town besides the SB. The VHCB/VLT conduct the vetting process and come to the town when funds are needed.

The PC is concerned that projects aren't being looked at from a planning prospective. The CFAC knows which lands are prime agriculture, forest, etc., and look at the projects on a case-by-case basis. They use a list of ag land that is ranked by potential using clearly-stated criteria. At the end of the day, the town can't stop someone from conserving their land.

The PC wondered where they fit in to the process; would the CFAC contact the PC if a project was in the village. The committee doesn't have much power and most of the land in the village is not eligible. The Chair wondered how much land in town was eligible; the CVRPC can probably figure it out easily. The CFAC doesn't currently have a step that looks at how a project is affected by the Town Plan; they will consider adding a step to check with the PC. The PC will review and make suggestions to the Policies & Procedures.

There was some discussion regarding the town creating a Conservation Commission, which would have more power and responsibilities than the CFAC.

Ms. Potter wondered how far along the owner is in process before the committee know about it; they generally find out after the appraisal is done. The PC would like to have a discussion sooner and the VHCB recognizes the need to get towns involved sooner.

Next steps:

- CFAC agrees to contact the PC when a project comes before them
- The town may look at creating a Conservation Commission
- CFAC needs more data; ask SB to add some funds to the budget for them to do more project research
- Town could consider earmarking certain land for development so they could say no if conservation project is asking for funds
- Put statement in Town Plan regarding conservation, possibly recommending carving out some lots for development
- Mr. Johnson will update the CFAC Policies & Procedures for PC review and SB adoption

East Montpelier Master Plan: Discussion in Village Density

The PC discussed ¼-acre versus ½-acre in the lower village subarea. Following are the discussion points:

- Mr. Stout – most of the villagers disliked the idea of ¼-acre minimums, no place to put backup septic, will reduce property values
- What do we want the village to look like
- ½-acre minimums are more realistic, can give PRD/PUD incentives
- Would like to encourage PRD/PUD anywhere in town, not just the village
- Mr. Stewart agrees with the ¼-acre minimum in the village; it doesn't mean everyone has to develop their lot; the PC should give people the tools to maximize their property
- Mr. Troia – if you don't have ¼-acre zoning, the infrastructure won't ever be there; without the infrastructure, you can't have ¼-acre minimums
- The Chair noted that you don't create a village just with density: sidewalks, traffic lights, bike paths
- Encourage shared driveways/roads on the highway; this will create depth
- What does the town need to do to invite businesses to come to town and keep them here
- Mr. Stout stated that his neighbors would be more comfortable with ½-acre minimums
- Mr. Hess noted that nothing will be able to change in the village with ½-acre minimums
- It appears that the PC needs more public input on this issue
- Ms. Potter feels they should move forward with ½-acre minimums with the understanding that the PC is not fully in agreement

The PC will discuss a vision at the next meeting and describe PRD/PUD in more detail. A public forum has not been scheduled yet.

East Montpelier Village Master Plan: Update on Draft Master Plan Document

Ms. Potter has started to draft the master plan and specific details can be filled in later. She feels she is about a month away from bringing it to the PC. The PC must make a decision on the lot size and haven't talked about some other issues yet. We need to send a draft to the state by the end of May per the grant.

Update on East Montpelier Old LaPerle Farm Property Committee

The committee has made edits to the grant application. They will meet again in two weeks to make final recommendations on the grant application.

Review Minutes

January 19, 2016

Motion: I move to approve the minutes as amended. Made: Mr. Hess, second: Mr. Stewart

Vote on Motion: Passed 6-0-1 (Potter abstained)

ZA Report

3 new permits since last meeting

DRB Report

Nothing new to report

Motion to Adjourn. Made: Mr. Pauly, second: Mr. Stout. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Kristi Flynn, Recording Clerk