

October 15, 2015

PC Members Present: Jean Vissering (Chair), Norman Hill, Julie Potter, Jack Pauly, Gene Troia, Kim Watson, Scott Hess

Others Present: Bruce Johnson (Town Administrator), Kristi Flynn (Recording Secretary), Earle Ellingwood, Rick Hopkins, Dave Coburn, Carole Witham

Call to order: 7:05pm

Changes to Agenda – None

Public Comment – None

Review of East Montpelier Zoning History with Former PC Members

The PC and the former PC members introduced themselves: Earle Ellingwood, Dave Coburn, and Carole Witham. The current PC is looking at the districts town-wide and is hoping to get some historical context from the PC members who were around when the districts were first created. Comments:

Carole Witham (CW)

- Town initially had 1-acre zoning; PC decided town needed zoning because they didn't want to be like towns with no zoning (junkyards, mobile home parks, etc.)
- One-half of the town was against zoning, and brought in lawyers
- Lot size was determined by the land being able to support septic
- The re-zoning process took 2-3 years
- Didn't decide to have 5 zones at the beginning, just worked out that way
- Soils were better closer to the river
- Many people were concerned with developers buying up 1-acre lots
- Used natural boundaries when possible, and property lines so that landowners wouldn't be in 2 different zones
- Lot of concern with a trailer park, didn't think the school could support that many kids
- What had more weight, interest of town or individuals? Definitely the town
- Were quite a few subdivisions, fairly stringent requirements, such as utilities being under ground
- Many public hearings were held regarding the new zoning districts
- Currently quite a bit of land is conserved; suggested PC look at that first because much of the developable land is already conserved

Earle Ellingwood (EE)

- As a lister, determined road frontage on a hand-drawn map in a loose leaf notebook
- Land was appraised by how many parcels could be on the road (1970's)
- Setbacks were determined by how big the lot was; people often came in for variances allowing for a garage to be as close to the road as an existing house
- Zones, particularly commercial zone along Route 14, need to be adjusted

Dave Coburn (DC)

- State sent out model zoning as it was starting
- Zone E was mostly farms
- State policy was to encourage keeping development off prime agricultural land
- Industrial zone – seemed like a logical place along Route 2; piece along Route 14 was zoned that way because a man wanted to have a slaughterhouse
- The logic regarding setbacks in the state models was to widen the roads and bury utilities
- Side setbacks were part of the models
- Regarding a town vote, the crossover is a population of 2500, so the townspeople voted in the new zoning
- Use zoning to implement the Town Plan

What changes would you like to see in town?

- CW – sewer through town, sidewalks, new town office, quality of life is great, trails system is incredible
- EE – take a look at conserved land, landowners get a tax benefit and then the land often sells for more
- DC – decide what PC wants town to look like in 50 years, regret that bypass wasn't built around town, could have village without the traffic

Plan for Future Discussions and People/Groups to Invite

The PC would like to get an overlay of the conserved land and farmland in town. There is some capability on the town website and ANR has online mapping. The Chair will ask CVRPC for additional layers, if necessary; possibly lands in current use. The PC wants to see on a map what's left after conserved land, current use and active farmed land are discounted. Look at goals under zoning in the Town Plan: ensuring opportunity for development and protect agricultural land.

Review of Selectboard Discussions of Proposed Amendments to East Montpelier Land Use & Development Regulations

The SB is discussing this topic at their next meeting, on the agenda at 7:30pm. Ms. Watson and Ms. Potter agreed to attend.

CVPRC Report: Julie Potter

The amendments to the 2008 Regional Plan were approved. The CVRPC received additional funding from the state. Work is continuing on the 2016 Regional Plan: Health & Communities and Transportation (infrastructure).

Reminder of VLCT Fall Planning and Zoning Forum on October 28, 2015

Mr. Pauly and Mr. Hill are registered and will attend.

Review Minutes

October 1, 2015

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

Vote on Motion: Passed 7-0

ZA Report

5 new permits since last meeting

DRB Report

- EM Recreation Board wants to move concession shed closer to the road – DRB granted a variance but requested the portable toilet be moved away from the road.
- Habitat for Humanity – re-applied to build a new home on the Benson property, requested and received a variance to leave the existing garage where it is
- Wells appeal by Glottmann – Wells received a permit to build an accessory dwelling on Cutler Heights; Ms. Glottmann is appealing based on water flow, size and subordination to the primary dwelling; neighbors testified; hearing was continued to 10/20
- Next scheduled DRB hearing is 11/3, Ms. Watson must recuse herself

Other Business

- Notice to town from Public Service Board re: hydroelectric project
- Notice of violation to people on Mays Way
- Vacancy on the SB – Steve Sparrows has moved and therefore resigned

Motion to Adjourn. Made: Ms. Watson, second: Mr. Hess. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Kristi Flynn, Recording Clerk