

Winhall Planning Commission
“Meeting Minutes for Tuesday, July 16, 2024

PRESENT: Tami Blanchard, Phil Fitzpatrick, Lucia Wing, Peter Strife, Jeff Yates, Cheyanne Pugliese, Hannah Gianotti

ABSENT: None

IN ATTENDANCE: Matt Bachler (WRC)

CALL TO ORDER: Blanchard called the meeting to order at 7:30PM at the Town Hall in Bondville.

The Planning Commission welcomed new members Cheyanne Pugliese & Hannah Gianotti to the Board.

APPROVAL OF PAST MEETING MINUTES:

After review, the meeting minutes of June 18, 2024, were approved as presented; *motion by Fitzpatrick; seconded by Strife; unanimous.*

PUBLIC COMMENTS: (None)

WPC TIME & DATE CHANGES:

After review, the Planning Commission voted to change the meeting day and time to the 2nd & 4th Wednesday of the month starting at 5:30 PM at the Town Hall in Bondville; *motion by Yates; seconded by Strife; unanimous.* Wing would notify the various Boards and post a notice around Town.

TOWN PLAN REDLINE UPDATE WITH MATT BACHLER:

The Planning Commission met with Matt Bachler (WRC) to review revisions, changes, and additions to the Town Plan. Review included the Natural Resources and Energy Sections including ground & surface water resources; well head protection areas; wetlands, deer wintering & bear habitats; forest blocks & habitat connectors a new section required by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources; and agriculture, forestry, earth & mineral, and air quality resources. The WPC discussed the positive benefits of the new section pertaining to forest blocks and habitat connectors which the State required to be part of town plans; potential adverse impacts of gravel and sand extraction activities; additions to the wellhead protection and wetland areas; expansion to the section on ground & surface resources, river corridors; and the need to update the Winhall Flood Hazard Regulations. The WPC noted that Vermont in general, including Winhall, was experiencing more frequent flood events. Bachler had enhanced the Energy Section with needed data. The WPC recommended sending the Section to Mike Cole, chair of the Energy Committee, for his take. Next rewrites would focus on housing, land use, flood resiliency, and completing the village center designation application with the State. Bachler reported that an Amherst Housing Needs Assessment Study was underway for the towns of Londonderry, Weston, Jamaica, and Winhall. He would keep the WPC posted. The Planning Commission thanked Bachler for his excellent upgrades to the Town Plan and would meet with him on 8/28.

STR ORDINANCE UPDATE:

Blanchard reported she had met with Bill Schwartz to discuss changes to the Ordinance and subsequently had emailed an updated version to the WPC for their review. Schwartz followed up with Blanchard asking that the Town Attorney not review the Ordinance at this time. Both Pugliese and Gianotti reported on their first reading of the Ordinance as “fresh eyes.” Pugliese submitted her response to the WPC which included “why limiting STR would not push housing stock to primary residents; what could we do in this housing crisis to help our neighbors; and benefits of short-term rentals.” Her guiding principle was “how to achieve the best results for the greatest number of people with the lightest touch of regulation.” Gianotti felt similarly that regulation of STR was needed, but how they were regulated was important to the well-being and future of Winhall. The WPC thanked the new members for their insight. Blanchard added, based on response, she would like a final rewrite at simplifying the Ordinance before handing it over to the Selectboard once and for all; it was their Ordinance. The WPC agreed.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Correspondence included discussion on new legislation pertaining to the Open Meeting Law.

ZONING ADMINSTRATOR UPDATE:

The Zoning Administrator reported she had issued (45) zoning permits to date including a request for a Home Occupation II in the residential zone.

As there was no further business, the Planning Commission adjourned the meeting; ***motion by Strife; seconded by Fitzpatrick; unanimous.***

Lucia Wing

Lucia Wing, Secretary
Winhall Planning Commission

Tami Blanchard

8/14/24

For the Planning Commission

Date: