

Town of Grafton Meeting Planning Commission Minutes
Tuesday, February 11, 2020, Grafton Town Garage

Planning Commissioners present: Dave Culver, Matt Siano, Chris Wallace, Valerie Rooney.
Staff present: Chuck Wise. Public present: Suzanne Welch, Al Sands, Winter Mary Wise.

Meeting called to order: 6:30PM

Agenda approval

Amended agenda to include an executive session. Correction cited for next month's meeting date. Added land use map discussion to the town plan agenda item. Motion to approve amended agenda (Chris, 2nd Val). PASSED

Public Comment

Al wants Commissioners to consider that current use, and particularly forestry, impacts approximately 65% of the town's total land area. In future updates of the town plan, it will be useful to add more narrative and recommendations concerning Grafton's forestry.

Windham Regional Commission

Dave provided an overview of a work meeting with John Bennett who is the Assistant Director and Senior planner for the Windham Regional Commission. They discussed a staff replacement for the planning commission, potential names to run an expert panel to address citizen concerns on the land use map, and a discussion about the upcoming community survey. Discussion followed about survey development and administering the survey – the consensus is to move forward on the survey but that it may not be realistic doing the project this summer. One side comment – it was noted that the survey can drop questions related to water/wastewater given the fact this work is getting done by the village wastewater committee. Dave will construct a timeline and updated survey draft for Commissioners to consider at the March meeting. Dave will also transit a survey to Suzanne for her review.

Development Review Board

Chris stated one minor subdivision was processed earlier this month, another one is slated to be addressed next month.

Grafton Selectboard

Chris stated pre-town meeting is coming up on the 24th. Commissioners are welcomed to participate, and Dave shared his hope lunch is served.

Village Center Designation

Dave stated this project remains ongoing. Jeff Nugent has all the materials for the mapping. We are just waiting for the regional approval of our town plan before doing a final push to submit the village designation packet to the state.

Energy Chapter Review

Dave shared with the group that Bill Kerns conducted a review of the town plan's energy chapter and that this work is available for Commissioners to review. This is an depth analysis of the energy chapter and it basically states we did everything that is required for an enhanced energy chapter. Additionally, Dave will be providing a brief paragraph to Marion Major stating the energy chapter complies with all the other elements of the town plan. Chuck stated that the Chair is authorized to report to WRC without formal action of the Commission.

Grafton Village Wastewater Committee

Matt stated the committee continues their work and is researching all the possible options that are out there to do wastewater processing.

Town Plan

Commissioners had an in-depth discussion regarding land use classifications and the land use mapping (approximately 1 hour, 20 minutes). Summarized points made during this discussion are:

- The primary concern is the language on critical resource areas makes it difficult to know if development is even possible for those tracts of land designated for 'critical resource protection.'
- The land use classifications in the town plan as well as the mapping is a priority for Planning Commissioners to address.
- Because the town plan does not define the word development, the term then defaults to how it is defined under state statute. It is important to understand how Act250 considers Grafton's Town Plan during their development review and permitting.
- The Commissioners want to convene a panel of experts who can provide the Town with accurate information about the land use classifications, the justification for critical resource areas, and the potential impacts of development review under Act 250.
- The village park is a good litmus test on how the new town plan could impact 'development' in a critical resource area. Various forestry related activities are clearly not development, but it is a grey area about building a trailhead or parking area that is an improvement and could be labeled development.
- The panel meeting should be in April so we can recruit speakers and do the necessary public outreach. It can be announced at town meeting as well as the Grafton News.

New Business

Motion to nominate Bill Kerns as interim or acting administrative officer pending the development of a job description and open solicitation for the position. (Chris, 2nd Val). PASSED. Commissioners requested a job description be prepared and discussed at the next meeting.

Executive Session

Motion to go into executive session (Chris, 2nd Val) PASSED.

Adjournment

8:42 PM

Next regular meeting: March 10, 2020