

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT 2009

The Planning Commission's primary mission, among other responsibilities, is to review and update its "Bylaws" and its "Master Plan" on an ongoing basis to insure that they are kept current and in conformity with the State of Vermont rules and regulations and to make recommendations for changes, as deemed appropriate, to the Town Board of Select People for their review, suggestions and enactment upon. It is through this process that the Warren Planning Commission guides and protects the vision of future development and community life in Warren.

The Warren Planning Commission dedicated most of their time in 2009 to the review and modification of the Warren Land Use and Development Regulations. The emphasis was mostly on Warren Village, both the Historic Residential District and the Commercial District. The Commission also reviewed updates to the Flood Hazard Regulations and the addition of a designated Fluvial Erosion Area. A good part of the zoning review was centered on the encouragement of moderate priced housing development and how the regulations could affect that.

As reported in our 2008 annual report, the Planning Commission was awarded a Municipal Planning Grant for the purpose of enhancing affordable housing development through the Land Use and Development Regulations. In 2009 The Warren Planning Commission continued this work with SmartGrowth VT. The Commission explored ways of fostering affordable housing through the creation of greater density in areas where infrastructure and services are available where there is already a feeling of density along with the potential for future growth. Our goal has been to contain sprawl which can invade the farmlands that we value and attempt to maintain. To that end the Commission spent a lot of time looking at allowed densities and uses in Warren Village, which they had also discussed at length during 2008.

With assistance from SmartGrowth VT, the Town applied for and received from the State of Vermont the Village Center Designation for a section of Historic Warren Village. This designation recognizes and encourages local efforts to revitalize the State's traditional village centers and provides various financial incentives to that end. Additionally, it will allow the Town of Warren to apply for the VT Neighborhood Center Designation in an effort to promote some moderately priced housing development specifically in the area of the Town Garage which the Town hopes to relocate.

The Planning Commission will be starting out 2010 with an update of the Town Plan as required by Vermont State Statute that will include updates to the statistical data as well as updating the stated objectives that have already been achieved. A current updated Town Plan affords the Town the opportunity to apply for Municipal Planning Grants as well as to be a statutory party on Act 250 applications.

Soon after the Town Plan updates are completed, the Planning Commission will be bringing before the public for discussion a series of amendments to the Land Use and Development Regulations. These amendments will address telecommunications facilities, affordable housing, planned residential developments, Village densities and allowable uses as well as State mandated discussions about flood hazard mitigation and fluvial erosion standards.

Current copies of the Warren Town Plan and the Warren Land Use and Development Regulations are available at the Town offices or on Warren's web site at <http://www.warrenvt.org/>. Planning Commission meeting agendas and minutes are also available at this site.

The Planning Commission meets at 7:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Monday of the month at the Municipal Building.

Planning Commission

Mike Ketchel, Chairman
Jim Sanford, Vice Chairman

Lisa Miserendino
Don LaHaye

John Goss Craig Klofach
Dan Raddock