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Town of Warren
Planning Commission
Minutes of Meeting
Monday March 9, 2015

Members Present: Mike Ketchel, Jim Sanford, Randy Graves, Camilla Behn and Dan Raddock.
Others Present: Louise and Bob Messner, Susanne and George Schaefer, Win Smith, Dotty Kyle, Eric Brattstrom, Susan Hemmeter, Dorothy Tod, Carole Crossman, Alice Cheney, Miron Malboeuf and Ruth Robbins.
Agenda: Call the meeting to order, 7:30 pm.

PUBLIC MEETING, CHAPTER 5 WARREN TOWN PLAN:

1. Call Meeting to Order 7:30 pm, Mike Ketchel, Acting Chair, and PC
2. Process Overview, Mike Ketchel, Vice Chair,
3. Public Comments:
4. Meeting Conclusion:

Annual Meeting:

1. The Commission shall schedule election of officers for the ensuing year and such other business as.

Regular Planning Commission Meeting:

1. Discuss and select planning project priorities
2. Review & sign minutes February 23, 2015
3. Other & New business:

Mr. Ketchel called the meeting to order at 7:33 pm.

He began the meeting stating that this was the second formal public hearing regarding changes and modifications to Chapter 5 Power for the People of the Warren Town Plan. Mr. Ketchel spoke of the time the Commission has spent on this revision, the involvement of the Warren Energy Committee, the Warren Conservation Commission and the attendance of a representative of the VT Public Service Department during the deliberations of the changes. He then invited those in the public to share their comments.

Mr. Smith, owner of Sugarbush Resort, told the Commission that he agreed with much of what the PC was proposing but first wanted to point out an error regarding the resort's upgrade of the snowmaking

process – it in fact does not save water as stated – the same amount of water is being pulled out but with less electricity usage. Mr. Smith then went on to say the one thing he did not find encouraging in the Town's Energy chapter was the reference to the potential utilization of wind power as one of the renewable energy sources. More specifically he expressed a large concern for the use of industrial wind turbines on either of the town's ridges, the Roxbury/Northfield ridge and the Lincoln ridge where the resort is located. Though the PC did state in the Town Plan the specific support of community distributed and small-scale wind projects that can take advantage of net metering, Mr. Smith and subsequently others, wanted stronger language about disallowing large, commercial sized wind installations on the ridges in Warren. As an example, Mr. Smith submitted to the PC a copy of the Town of Windham's Energy Chapter as well as the Natural Resource Chapter.

Mr. Messner echoed Mr. Smith's comment about stronger language about disallowing large scale wind and spoke specifically to the issue about aviation safety with the Sugarbush Airport and the ever popular glider program which uses the Roxbury Ridge for instruction due to the three types of air lifts that can be found there. Ms. Hemmeter asked if the PC knew what GMP's next 5 year plan was for transmission capacity since the lack of expansion by GMP seemed to be a key ingredient in the PC believing large scale towers would not be possible on the ridges. Mr. Ketchel responded that it was his understanding that there were no plans for expansion whereas another member of the public noted that some developers brought their own means of expanding capacity with them.

Ms. Hemmeter commented further stating that the Town Plan should reflect the desires of the community and that she felt there needed to be more specificity. She pointed out that there did not seem to be much more specific definition between the 2005 Town Plan version and the 2011 version. Ms. Hemmeter also pointed out the repeat of a paragraph in two places. The PC replied that they thought it was worth repeating but would rewrite one of the paragraphs. Ms. Hemmeter then asked the Commission why they are just doing this one change and not doing all the updates to the Town Plan at once. The PC replied that it was their decision as it was more manageable to focus on one issue at a time. Mr. Smith expressed his opinion that wind energy was not appropriate for Warren and should be discouraged and that solar power should be encouraged. He also mentioned the care that was taken in protecting wildlife when the resort installed the Slide Brook chairlift and that there are certain times of the year that they do not operate the chair so as not to disrupt wildlife habitats. Mr. Graves pointed out that despite any damage to the vegetation with the building of the Slide Brook chair that the area has grown back as if nothing had happened. Ms. Hemmeter spoke up saying that the development of roads for industrial wind towers require a lot of clear cutting and additional fill brought in so it is not a good comparison with Slide Brook.

Ms. Kyle spoke of the many PC meetings she attended during the Commission's deliberation of changes to this chapter. She felt that their approach of looking forward with the knowledge that technology was rapidly evolving was responsible and that it was important to have a Town Plan that doesn't close the door and eliminate options. Her husband, Eric Brattstrom, spoke up and noted that with their energy efficient home he has updated the heating system five times to better systems and better results. Ms. Hemmeter asked the PC if they shouldn't have a goal for solar power as they do for wind power. The PC

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agreed that they needed to reiterate the referred to VT State goal under solar as they had done with wind. Mr. Smith queried that it would be interesting to see how many wind towers the State's goal would translate into. Mr. Sanford relayed some statistics that demonstrated how much more acreage solar panels cover to produce power equal to only one or a few wind towers. Mr. Raddock shared with the public that in meeting with a representative of the Public Service Department the Commission came away with the feeling that an outright "no" wind towers would not benefit the Town should someone want to put one up. He said that to emphasize where we might see small-scale towers would give us a better seat at the table, so to speak. Mr. Ketchel chimed in saying that professionals in the field of wind energy pointed out there is some wind energy that could be utilized that is not necessarily on just the ridgelines. Mr. Raddock added that he would like Mr. Messner to do a little write up on the importance of the ridgeline to the glider program as that would be helpful to the PC.

At about 8:15pm the PC and those in attendance had ended their comments and discussion. The Commission thanked the public for their participation and that the PC would take their suggestions and comments under consideration.

The next item of business before the Planning Commission was the Annual Meeting for the election of officers. A motion was made by Mr. Graves and seconded by Mr. Sanford to go into executive session for the purpose of personnel discussion. Both Mr. Malboeuf and Ms. Robbins were included in the executive session. The PC voted unanimously for executive session which lasted approximately ten minutes. The PC took no action as a result of their executive session.

Ms. Behn moved to nominate Mr. Ketchel as Chairman of the PC. Mr. Graves seconded the nomination. Hearing no other nominations the members voted unanimously for Mr. Ketchel as Chairman. Mr. Graves moved to nominate Mr. Sanford as Vice Chairman of the PC. Mr. Raddock seconded the motion. Hearing no other nominations the Commission voted unanimously for Mr. Sanford. Mr. Raddock moved to nominate Ms. Robbins as Secretary to the PC which was seconded by Ms. Behn. There were no other nominations and the PC voted unanimously for Ms. Robbins as secretary. Ms. Behn volunteered to be the CVRPC representative; Mr. Ketchel said he would continue to be the TAC representative and Mr. Sanford will remain as the PC representative to the MRVPD Steering Committee.

The Planning Commission then went on to a regular meeting agenda which began with their action list for 2015 that they had identified at the previous meeting. After some discussion they prioritized the items as follows: finish up modifications to Chapter 5 of the Town Plan; finalize the proposed zoning changes in regard to changes in the Town Plan; plan out and execute those items in the Town plan that need to be updated for the April 2016 renewal; plan a charrette to create a "town green" where the Ruby Blair house once stood.

In other business both Mike Bridgewater and Jim Sanford were reappointed by the Select Board to new terms on the Planning Commission. No news from Regional or the MRVPD Steering committee. Mr. Sanford noted that he would not be in town for the March 23rd meeting.

