

Shaftsbury Planning Commission (PC)

Wednesday September 27, 2023

In person at Cole Hall and remotely via Zoom

Public hearing on proposed bylaw revisions and regular meeting

1) Call to order

Acting chair commissioner Chris Williams called the hearing and the regular meeting to order at 6 p.m. Also present were commissioners Mike Foley and Nancy Burns and zoning administrator Shelly Stiles. Three citizens joined via Zoom during the meeting.

Mr. Williams summarized the proposed changes to the zoning bylaw: a provision to reduce road frontage requirements in rural zones to 75 feet as long as the affected acreage isn't more than 1.5 times the minimum for the district; a clarification of how the Development Review Board is to review applications concerning uses not identified in the bylaw; and a change in zone for parcels 16 20 20.1 and 16 21 22 from Village Residential to Rural 40, to better accommodate a new municipal firearms ordinance covering the Village Residential and Village Center zones.

After little discussion, Mr. Foley moved to approve the proposed changes and send them to the Select Board for review and a hearing and possible inclusion on the March 2024 town meeting ballot. Ms. Burns seconded the motion, which passed 3-0-0.

2) Minutes

The minutes were tabled to a later meeting.

3) Other business

Mr. Williams reviewed the actions taken in the September 13 meeting, including coming to a consensus to include in the Enhanced Energy Plan a maximum size for solar arrays of twenty acres, and to include screening requirements still to be developed.

Karen Mellinger, who joined the meeting via Zoom, asked why the Commission was dealing with such matters when she thought it had been agreed that the PC would leave such work to an energy committee to be appointed in the near future. She recommended the PC contact or review materials compiled by Annette Smith, who has worked with several communities seeking to establish energy committees. She said specificity in the conditions set in the Enhanced Energy Plan is very important, that only specific requirements can protect the town. Ms. Mellinger said she thought the moratorium suggested by Bennington County Regional Commission staff could and should be adopted. She said resident Ann Smith indicated an interest in serving on the committee.

Ms. Burns explained that the PC had decided to forego a moratorium and instead devise scale and screening requirements for inclusion in the Enhanced Energy Plan on its own.

Mr. Foley moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:35 p.m. Ms. Burns seconded the motion, which passed 3-0-0.