

**Shaftsbury Planning Commission
Shaftsbury Town Hall
Buck Hill Rd at 7:00 pm
Regular Meeting
January 22, 2013**

Members present: Chris Williams (Chair), Abigail Beck, William Pennebaker, David Spurr (Vice-Chair)

Members absent: Norm Gronning

Others present: Tyler Yandow (zoning administrator), Sandra Mangsen (Recording Clerk), Sue Balutis, Tom Huncharek, Jay T. Palmer, Joann Race, Mitchell Race, Jeri Schoof, Art Whitman

1. Call to order

Chris Williams called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Minutes of Jan 8, 2013.

Motion. To approve the minutes of the meeting of Jan. 8, 2013, as corrected. Moved by Bill Pennebaker; seconded by David Spurr. Carried, 3-0-1 (Beck abstaining).

3. Town plan Revision

There was a wide-ranging discussion of the revision of the Town Plan. Chris Williams began by asking how best to maximize public involvement in the discussion. A change in the structure of the Planning Commission (enlargement for at least the coming year) or the formation of an Ad Hoc Committee had both been suggested.

David Spurr suggested that open meetings would be a better vehicle for public participation. Bill Pennebaker agreed, with the proviso that a change in the mechanism might be warranted if the process seemed to be in need of improvement.

Chris Williams brought Abigail Beck and those in attendance up to date on the discussion of this issue. Abigail favored keeping the meetings open rather than limiting participation to a formally structured committee. Jeri Schoof agreed, but Art Whitman made the point that the public would then have no formal role in decision making. The consensus was to continue with an open meeting format, while acknowledging that change might be necessary if the process were seen to be inadequate.

Other town plans may offer useful models; that of Landgrove was recommended.

Chris then asked what has changed in Shaftsbury over the last few years that would have an impact on the Town Plan.

Development pressure recognized in the last Town Plan seems no longer to be an issue, as the town is not gaining population. Mitchell Race pointed out that without significant development pressure, the residents have an opportunity to reflect on the state of the town; Art Whitman reminded those in attendance that growth cannot really be controlled, merely directed. Joann Race made the point that some who choose to reside here is able to work from home while holding positions elsewhere, the frequency of which has probably increased over the last few years.

Chris Williams asked what Shaftsbury has to offer its residents. The answer was "quality of life," which is already reflected in the current Town Plan. There was some discussion of what that term might mean. Vermont has high graduation rates from high school, but fewer attend college here.

Composting and issues around the land fill may need to be addressed in the Town Plan.

Energy efficiency is also a concern, as the state may launch an initiative re housing energy efficiency. On the other hand, wind power has generated much opposition in some parts of the state. Jay Palmer wondered why many homes in Shaftsbury have not been winterized, and suggested that increasing the percentage of winterized homes may be a topic to address in the Town Plan. Chris Williams spoke about efforts to assist lower income residents with achieving energy efficiency in their homes. Tyler Yandow described a program known as PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy), in which the town can act as conduit for low interest loans for energy-related improvements to housing. The loan recipient repays through an assessment, which passes to the next owner should the house be sold.

The discussion will continue at future meetings.

4. Village Residential zoning

Chris Williams described the three areas that the Planning Commission has identified as potential Village Residential (VR) districts.

It was suggested that a confusion between two uses of VR —as a generic term for existing and expanded residential districts and in reference to the current VR1 — needs to be remedied in the document.

The details of Table 4.2.2 (Dimensional Requirements in VR Districts) were discussed at some length, in particular with respect to required set backs for lots of different sizes. To make the regulations (and the table) consistent, the required "Minimum Front Yard" for lots of 40,000 square feet will be changed from thirty feet to twenty feet.

It was noted that all three proposed additional Village Residential districts (VR2) are adjacent to current VR districts.

5. Sign ordinance.

Bill Pennebaker suggested that the ordinance be discussed again at a subsequent meeting.

David Spurr asked for clarification of the language with respect to size limitations on signage, with respect to the number of signs in relation to the total square foot limit on signage. Consensus was that the size limitation refers to an individual sign; number of signs may be regulated as well in each zoning district.

6. Other Business

Chris Williams noted that three matters about to go to the Selectboard require a Public Hearing: the sign ordinance, multi-family housing in the village, and zoning map changes (the new VR2 district).

Motion. To adopt the proposed Village Residence (VR) Districts (Section 4.2), as amended at this meeting. Moved by Bill Pennebaker; seconded by Abigail Beck. Carried, 4-0-0.

A Public Hearing will be warned for the meeting of February 26, 2013.

7. Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Mangsen
(Recording Clerk)