

Shaftsbury Planning Commission
Shaftsbury Town Hall
Buck Hill Rd at 7:00 pm
Regular Meeting
November 13, 2012

Members present: Chris Williams (Chair), Norm Gronning, William Pennebaker,
David Spurr (Vice Chair)

Members absent: Abigail Beck

Others present: Tyler Yandow (Zoning Administrator), Sandra Mangsen
(Recording Clerk), Art Whitman, Jennifer Viereck, Jay T. Palmer,
Steve Washburn, Art Paulin

1. Call to Order

David Spurr called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Approval of minutes of meeting of October 23, 2012.

Motion: To approve the minutes of the meeting on Oct 23, 2012, as corrected. Moved by David Spurr; seconded by Bill Pennebaker. Carried, 4-0-0.

3. Continued Discussion of Sign Ordinance.

Chris Williams suggested that it might be helpful to focus on the larger issues rather than on the smaller details in the proposed revision.

Art Whitman made the point that a single regulation covering signs at all businesses will not be very effective. Various ways of categorizing businesses were considered: size of business, location on a heavily or lightly travelled road, zone in which the business is located, amount of street frontage.

It was also acknowledged that two concerns are relevant to the sign ordinance: preservation of the rural character of Shaftsbury and encouragement of economic development. Bill Pennebaker, who had prepared the draft under consideration, proposes to quote from the town plan with respect to these two aims.

There was discussion of the definitions of permitted signs in terms of sign area, and the type and amount of illumination permitted.

Chris Williams expressed his concern that large corporations, which have standard sign policy, would insist on maintaining their policy and thus change the rural character of Shaftsbury, but others pointed out that even McDonald's and Stewart's have larger and smaller signs in particular communities.

Art Whitman suggested allowing internally illuminated signs in some zones, but not in others. He pointed out that Shaftsbury had many more signs historically, as evidenced by existing photographs.

Steven Washburn tried to raise the issue of the request for rezoning of properties in Shaftsbury Hollow, but was declared out of order.

Tyler Yandow mused that the objection to internally illuminated signs is perhaps that they tend not to be built of wood (and are thus out of character). One might limit the number of lumens, or require that internally illuminated signs (other things being equal) be smaller than equivalent wooden signs (providing an incentive for businesses to use signs made of wood).

In an effort to continue the discussion productively, the chairman asked Mr. Washburn to leave, as he had been declared out of order.

A five-minute recess was declared, after which the discussion moved on to other aspects of the draft of the revision to the sign ordinance. The question of prohibition or regulation of illuminated signs was left unresolved.

Re Item 3.4.4: It was noted that the regulation of signs for businesses not located on a state highway needs to be addressed here, but has been overlooked.

Bill Pennebaker suggested allowing larger single-sided signs (say, six square feet vs. a double-sided sign of four square feet per side). Providing an incentive to install signs parallel to the road rather than perpendicular (which would likely be more of an annoyance to neighbors) by allowing larger signs if they are parallel was considered.

The chairman proposed that the discussion begin with Item 3.4.4 at the next meeting. Bill Pennebaker will update the draft of the revised sign ordinance to reflect changes suggested by this evening's discussion.

4. Review discussion of zoning district changes in Shaftsbury Hollow.

Chris William's draft of the decision was discussed, and some minor changes were suggested, in particular with respect to the problem of providing town services to homes on secondary roads that are not well maintained. The chairman will revise the draft and bring to the Selectboard for their consideration.

5. Discussion with Zoning Administrator Tyler Yandow.

The need to reissue the zoning bylaws, including new sections (composting, flood hazard), was discussed. A Planning Grant might be helpful to fund the extensive work required. In the first instance, a digital copy of the existing document in consistent format is required, after which it needs to be reorganized in a less cumbersome form. Chris Williams will investigate availability of support for production of the existing bylaws in a consistent digital format.

6. Discussion of timetable of Planning Commission activities in coming months.

Deferred until the next meeting

7. Other business as required

There was none.

8. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting. Moved by Bill Pennebaker; seconded by David spur.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Mangsen
Recording Clerk