

**Shaftsbury Planning Commission  
Shaftsbury Town Hall  
Buck Hill Rd at 7:00 pm  
Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
February 26, 2013**

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

Members absent: None

Others present: Tyler Yandow (Zoning Administrator), Sandra Mangsen (Recording Clerk), Harriett Durand, Oliver Durand, Tom Huncharek, Ronald Lindsey, Joanne Race, Jeri Shoof, Susan Taylor

**1. Call to Order**

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

**2. Minutes of February 12, 2013.**

Consideration of the minutes was deferred until after the public hearing.

**3. PUBLIC HEARING – Proposed Bylaw amendments to Sections 4.1.1 Permitted uses in RR Districts, 4.1.3 Conditional Uses Permitted in RR Districts, 4.2 Village Residential Districts, and the zoning map.**

Chris Williams called the public hearing to order 7:02 p.m. The proposed amendments were considered individually.

Expansion of the Village Residential Area

The document details three options for expansion of the VR area.

Oliver Durand expressed several concerns:

- negative impact of the expansion on individual properties, which currently abut non-VR zones;
- difficulty of establishing water supply and effective sewage disposal in the proposed expanded VR areas;
- particular difficulty at higher elevations of ensuring sufficient water pressure.

Chris Williams responded that in all of the proposed VR areas town water is a possibility; moreover, the proposal is consistent with the existing Town Plan, which recommends concentrating development in village. Further scattered development in more rural areas is, in the Commission's view, to be avoided.

Oliver Durand agreed with Chris Williams that maintaining sufficient water pressure could be accomplished by adding a pump station.

Mr. Durand and Ronald Lindsey were concerned that abutting property owners had not been formally notified. Chris Williams responded that, in this instance, notification was not required by law.

Mr. Lindsey expressed his concern about possible changes in property values and the tax rate, should the proposal be approved by the Selectboard. Chris Williams responded that no effect on the tax rate is anticipated.

Mr. Lindsey also made clear his concern about the meaning of "multifamily" housing, which the amended bylaw permits in VR zones. Chris Williams asked to defer that question until later in the hearing. Mr. Lindsey suggested that the whole proposal be dropped.

Michael Foley asked about the demand for new housing in Shaftsbury. Chris Williams agreed that there may be little demand at present, but noted that the Planning Commission is attempting to envision the situation in the more distant future, when demand could rise. The question in the Commission's view is how growth in Shaftsbury should occur in the future: via further subdivision of rural lands, or via concentration of residential development within the village itself.

#### Multi family housing in Village Residential district

Chris Williams noted that the current bylaw allows for multifamily housing in Rural Residential but not in Village Residential districts. The proposal is to alter this, permitting multifamily housing in both VR districts and RR districts.

Oliver Durand suggested leaving the current bylaw unchanged for RR districts, while permitting multifamily housing in the VR district.

Chris Williams agreed with the suggestion that the term "multifamily" needs to be clarified with respect to the proposed amendment.

#### Home occupations in Rural Residential and Village Residential Districts

Chris Williams noted that the intent of the amendment is to make the regulations for home occupations somewhat less restrictive, which may aid economic development as individuals are able to launch new home businesses.

There being no further comments or questions, Chris Williams adjourned the public hearing at 7:45 p.m., and the Commission agreed to reconvene at 7:50 p.m.

#### **4 Sign Ordinance – Continuation of Discussion**

Consideration deferred.

**5. Town Plan (continuation of review) – Presentation by Jim Sullivan of the Bennington County Regional Commission, regarding updated statistics pertinent to the Town.**

Jim Sullivan engaged in extended discussion with the members of the Planning Commission, which was intended to help them in their current revision of the Town Plan. He distributed an information sheet about the BCRC, a consortium of seventeen towns, whose local representatives are Bill Pennebaker and Craig Bruder.

PC Members asked Mr. Sullivan to comment on several issues:

- structure of the Town Plan (narrative vs. point form)
- changes to Shaftsbury's industrial district (perhaps establishment of a light industrial district)
- possible town-level initiatives and educational efforts with respect to energy strategies
- training for Board and Commission members (Megan Donckers noted that VLCT training is upcoming for the Development Review Board)

Jim Sullivan then asked about issues likely to arise for the Planning Commission.

Several issues were mentioned:

- bylaw changes
- transportation issues, including changes to the intersection of Church St and Rte 7A
- possibilities for public access to the local trail system
- possible effects of the North Bennington Prudential School in Shaftsbury
- State-mandated composting, current state of those regulations, issues of quality control
- transport, including re-establishment of passenger rail and the need to upgrade rail crossings in Shaftsbury
- development of local trails and outdoor recreation possibilities (Chris Williams noted that Glastenbury is the largest wilderness area in Vermont, but remains relatively undeveloped in terms of outdoor recreation and tourism)
- development of the Scenic Byway

Jim Sullivan asked about communication and awareness of BCRC activities; currently communication is via the web site, and a bi-monthly e-mail newsletter went to those who request it.

Chris Williams and other Commission members thanked Jim Sullivan for his participation in the meeting.

It was agreed that discussion of the Town Plan revision would begin at the next meeting with Section 2.9.

David Spurr reminded members of the questionnaire he devised and asked for their feedback. David will revise the questionnaire and send it to members for comments; the intention is to make it available at the Town Meeting and on voting day (Mar 5).

**6. Approval of minutes of February 12, 2013.**

**Motion. To approve the minutes of February 12, 2013, as amended. Moved by Bill Pennebaker; seconded by Abigail Beck. Carried unanimously.**

**7. Adjournment**

By acclamation, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Mangsen  
(Recording Clerk)