## TOWN OF WATERFORD PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING/PUBLIC HEARING DATED MAY 20, 2015 MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Howard Remick, Mike Barrett, Bob duMaire,

**Dave Senio** 

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bill Dimick, John Gillott, Tom Robinson

NONMEMBERS PRESENT: Irene Nagle, Christopher Brimmer, Gary Allard,

Bent Beck, Fred Saar, Secretary Carol Priest,

members of the public

The meeting was brought to order at 7:00 P.M. by Howard.

No minutes were approved and no citizens' concerns were heard at this time.

## **Old Business**

NVDA representative Irene Nagle presented the power point program she created on the Waterford survey completed this Spring. She noted that the results will be available on the town website soon. She outlined some of the new requirements for inclusion in the town plan. NVDA is charged with updating the plan through a grant received by the town. The survey is the first step in updating the plan, which is not current at this time. She noted 232 responses to the survey, representing 22% of the populace over age 18. After reviewing the demographics, she presented the following highlights:

- The top three criteria important to the quality of life in town: privacy, rural setting, high school choice (207 respondents)
- Adequacy of services and facilities available in town / greatest needs in the area of facilities/services: high-speed internet, cell phone service, recreational facilities (208 respondents)
- Respondents noting recreational facilities needing improvement cited bike paths, hiking trails, and cross-country ski trails as being needed (94 respondents)
- Housing types needed: independent senior housing, assisted living for seniors, single-family detached houses (94 respondents)
- 42.79% of respondents believe there is no need for additional commercial uses in town; 36.54% believe there is a need; 20.67% were undecided (208 respondents)
- Of those answering 'yes' to the above question, 66.67% of respondents specified agricultural value-added manufacturing; 45.16% favored a restaurant/coffee shop; 33.33% favored a convenience store (88 respondents)
- 62.5% said they would not benefit from a park and ride / public bus stop (208 respondents)
- 39.90% of respondents favored building a new town hall in the area of the town garage/fire station; 24.04% specified other location, not needed, or had no opinion (208 respondents)
- 47.57% of respondents favored reducing the overall density of potential development in the Rural Residential District; 36.41% were opposed (206 respondents)

• 34.51% of those in favor of reducing the overall density mentioned above specified one dwelling per 10 acres; 33.63% specified one dwelling per 5 acres (113 respondents)

Irene concluded her presentation with an explanation of the term 'cluster housing', as some respondents indicated misunderstanding the concept. In addition, she noted that through openended questions, the following areas were identified as priority planning issues needing to be addressed in the town plan: retaining rural/agricultural use of land, taxes, regulating chicken farms, regulating solar farms / energy facilities, affordability, and more (72 respondents). Irene explained that the legislature is working on creating state statues for solar energy facilities, with respect to setback requirements, etc.

During the question and answer period which followed, residents expressed concerns about protecting the ridgelines in town, specifically the effects of subdivisions on the ridgelines; maintaining natural beauty along the rivers; protecting the historic village center. Kate Piper asked that the Planning Commission look again at protecting the historic village district. Irene reiterated that the town plan must be current to make any change in the zoning bylaw and that 'action steps' must be in place to effect any changes. When asked how the Planning Commission would use the data obtained from the survey, Howard responded that the board is looking at changing the zoning districts, i.e., residential district 1, 2, etc., as well as examining the high density housing issue. Mike explained that the board is still updating all the data in the old town plan and is giving its input to NVDA as they work together on the revisions.

## **New Business**

Howard explained the hearing portion of the meeting was a procedural step in amending the Waterford Subdivision Regulations with a provision for Minor Subdivisions. Zoning Administrative Officer Chris Brimmer noted there is a definition in the document for minor (as well as major) subdivisions but the language specifying procedures and requirements for both needed to be more precise. The new provision will provide clearer guidelines for the Development Review Board as it processes all applications for subdivisions. He explained the need for specific criteria that may trigger a major subdivision requirement, such as topography, land features, etc. Kate Piper asked if townspeople present would support pursuing the historic design district, similar to what was done in the 1980s. Chris said it could be a part of the updated town plan, especially if some of the work necessary was already done, such a boundaries, architectural research, etc.

Howard called for a vote.

Mike moved to approve the minor subdivision amendment to the Waterford Subdivision Regulations as presented and forward it to the Selectboard for approval.

Bob seconded the motion.

Howard called for a vote and all present approved the motion.

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There was no other business brought forward at this time.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Priest, Secretary

Approved: