

# TOWN OF STAMFORD, VERMONT

~ Chartered 1753 ~  
986 Main Road, Stamford, VT 05352  
Phone (802) 694-1361  
Fax (802) 694-1636

## **PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

STAMFORD TOWN OFFICE

10/15/2018

7:00 p.m.

(UNAPPROVED MINUTES)

**Present:** Daniel J. Potvin Chair, Aaron Malachuk Co-Chair, Steven Bechtel, Steven Denault, Helen Fields, Kurt Gamari, Jenifer Hughs

**Absent:** David Saldo, Teresa Stimpson, Shelia Lawrence

**Visitors:** James Sullivan, Jim Stimpson

**Quorum:** Yes

**Welcome members and visitors**

**Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag**

**Call to Order:** 7:15 p.m.

**Hearing of Visitors (time allowance 5 minutes per visitor per topic)**

### **Reading and Approval of records and orders**

Regular minutes of Planning Commission meeting of 10/15/2018 reviewed.

MOTION to accept minutes with typographical errors corrected; Steven Bechtel SECOND Helen Fields, all in favor. MOTION APPROVED.

### **Discussion (Agenda)**

#### **Chapter 10 Energy:**

Jim Sullivan from BCRC was present to answer questions and discuss energy plan.

### **Questions/Answers:**

Q: Jim Stimpson: Are we bound to this if we make an energy plan and don't do what we planned. What are other towns doing?

A: Jim Sullivan: Energy used to be the shortest chapter, then last update it became more prominent. Two years ago the legislature passed Act 174 to lay down requirements for Town Plans energy chapters, if town wants to get a 'determination of energy compliance.' Other towns are doing what we are doing now. It has to target goals, include data. But there is a fair bit of flexibility in the structure. He kept ours as short as possible and still fill requirements. Dorset has one 30 pages long, not 15. More detail. You have to have the basic elements. The BCRC needs to be able to go down the checklist in order to approve it.

Q: Is there any incentive to be more aggressive with goals or more conservative?

A: (Jim Sullivan) There is a balancing act. There are special incentives. Our goals are the state goal. The big overarching state goal is that the state of Vermont will get 90% of energy by 2050. According to analysis, the only way to meet it is to reduce the total energy demand by 1/3. We need to change the way we are doing things. We need to get rid of oil, internal combustion engines, and that is extremely ambitious though some say it is inevitable. If we don't have those goals, we don't have a plan that can be approved. Take advantage of weatherization, switch from boilers, try to make efficiency gains in other areas. We cannot look at something else to lower the footprint, because it is all pushing hard to get to 2050 goals. It is hard to measure progress. Data collection does not exist other than electricity.

Q: Jim Stimpson: Do we need it to be approved?

A: Jim Sullivan: Two reasons to do this: education, what kinds of changes do we have to make, and why. The other incentive is that if we do adopt the plan, the whole Town Plan has elevated regulatory standing, especially Section 248, electric transmission and generation. We have more say about where they place wind, solar, hydro, biomass, etc. There are many proposals to bring new transmission from Canada and Vermont to states south of us. They are trying to meet their standards also.

Q: Jenn Hughs: Are there local incentives?

A: Jim Sullivan: There are programs and incentives throughout the state; some are better than others; purchases, free giveaways for plugins, significant for energy audits and weatherization; big discounts for new wood fired heat. He has spoken to fuel dealers to diversify and become energy service providers. There will be little oil business. If businesses could start selling weatherization, different heating systems and fuels, many former oil dealers have started to do well by changing over. BCRC might give workshop for fuel dealers to convince them. There may be discounted rates, or selling back to grids. Jim Stimpson: that went well but then lost incentives for solar farms. Jim Sullivan: there is still a lot of interest from solar developers. Jim Stimpson says the incentives are not great though. Sullivan says they were the best in the country and really large ones are gone but net metering projects are still of interest. There is a lot of information available at BCRC website. BCRC does not get paid to do this anymore. They will try to hold workshops. We can work locally to have a town energy committee or coordinator.

### **Discussion:**

Jim Sullivan thinks net metering will continue. He has 2.6kw solar panels at his home, and he generates 400kwh and sells it back to GMP; gets a credit in the summer. Jim Stimpson: North Adams has excess power and sells it to local communities. Co-op systems are net metering. Jenn: if we did that it would get us closer to goals. Sullivan: this building may have some roof faces that could be used for solar. Stimpson says a local guy says it is doable but not likely. Sullivan: if we could, find a good-size user, like school and town hall. We discussed the possibility of starting a project here. Sullivan says if we start to work on the plan that would be great. We discussed working with Chris Kilfoyle about starting, and creating an Energy Commission.

Jim Sullivan: page 61: we need data and he pulled info from Town reports. He found school, fire station, municipal vehicles, electricity, and street lighting data. He can estimate gallons but if we had actual numbers it would be better. Also, town office light and heat. He has cost of diesel for fire and municipal. We need totals on gallons to improve our data report. Can we ask the town Treasurer to assist with this data? Put that info in page 61 table. Document what it would cost. We can ask Finance Committee to do this. We should do this before approving the Energy chapter of the Town Plan.

Other questions: page 59 graphic often has people ask questions; it seems undoable. We are not held to it, but this is what we would have to do to meet the state goal. We can reduce our footprint with local sourcing of supplies; example FOOD obtained locally would reduce our dependence. Kurt: people don't want to change. We discussed cultural change. Sullivan just purchased a hybrid electric gets 65-70 and it cost \$18,000. People will change if we can prove it saves money. There is less stigma; the second motivation is supporting the local regional economy; it is better to use Vermont electricity than fossil fuels from overseas or Canada. We need a system in place.

Jim Stimpson: Stamford does not help our elderly. Meals on Wheels only come once a month. If we can lower electric bills we will help our elderly. Sullivan: home heating is the highest cost.

Jim Sullivan: Renewable energy sighting: p.62 solar resource map: white areas have no possibility for solar. We can take this map and: We can identify places where we DON'T want solar energy. Put it in the plan to protect it. If we identify PREFERRED sites, we can get developers to go there.

1. In old landfills, gravel pits, rooftops, brownfields developers get extra money.
2. If town identifies preferred site in town plan, developer gets preferred extra money. Pastureland is okay because it helps the farmer continue agriculture.
3. Dorset, Bennington, Sunderland identified potential preferred sites and asked the owners if they WANT to be preferred or DON'T want to be. He thinks we should do that. He can suggest engineers.
4. Most projects are now 3-4 acres of solar panels.
5. Wind turbines are twice as efficient as solar, occupy less space. One turbine would be
6. 20 acres of solar and only half as much. Kurt: what about river turbines? Pownal guy walked away from a hydro project he was trying to implement; to get enough electricity he would have to modify the stream flow and pipe it off.
7. How can we get wind? Get in before the public utility does.
8. We need to develop sites before we approve, or stay neutral.
9. Can we designate off limits for future wind? Yes. We would have to provide written rationale for any kind of development. Then we could cross them all off, but then we won't be able to fulfill the region and this makes it hard for the regional plan.
10. Motion to ask Sullivan to put on the map page 63 that we we want the NW area of wind possibility preferred. Also that Hoosac Range be the UNPREFERRED location for wind. It was noted that we can amend the plan later if we decide that we want the Hoosac Range to be preferred.
11. Agenda for next meeting: sites in town that would be good for solar panels. Example: school, town office, possible forest line.
12. Jim Sullivan will make amendments and come back to talk about preferred sites. He will provide us with better maps with road names and surface water, for solar.

## **Town of Stamford Zoning and Bylaws 2017**

Change suggestions made in last meeting: Steve B has some questions.

- a. Accessory building definition?
  - b. Change of use definition? Sullivan: not defined by state law, but good idea to create a definition. Traffic, parking, lighting, etc. Stimson wants if person gets a permit, business fails, still have a license;
  - c. Sullivan said the ice cream stand was not a change of use as described tonight, but it would be a good idea to define what change of use WOULD be. The Planning Development Act does not define a lot. IF we don't define it in ordinance, it becomes case law but if we have a good rationale, we can recommend a definition approved by Select board other than what is in statute.
  - d. Sullivan: also if situation and we make a ruling and appeals and zoning board makes ruling, until bylaw is amended.
2. Dan: agriculture: we need a section on agriculture. Okay to have farm stand if selling your agriculture on your land. Town can ask notice so we know it is there. If they expand and get music and hayrides, weddings, BBQs, every weekend, etc. then cafe, there is now developing regulations at state level. At what point is it now retail use; that is a change of use!
  3. Do agricultural buildings like chicken coops have to follow setback rules? Probably not.

### **Action**

1. Next meeting Oct 29 at 7pm: talk about preferred sites. Then invite Sullivan to the following meeting. Put in agenda and make sure it gets community notified.
2. We will meet 11/12 with Jim Sullivan. We will meet 11/26, both at 7pm.

### **Old Business**

### **New Business**

### **Adjournment**

MOTION to adjourn, Dan Potvin SECOND Aaron Malachuk Meeting Adjourned @ 9:15 p.m.

Next Planning Commission meetings scheduled for: 10/29/2018 @ 7:00 p.m.

Recorded by Helen Fields

Submitted by Teresa Stimpson, Clerk