

West Fairlee Planning Commission

Minutes – Monthly Meeting of July 14, 2014

Present: Skip Brown, Geoff Gardner, Nancy Malmquist, Al Pfeiffer, Guy Wilson and Cleo Kearns who is considering joining the commission

The meeting began at 6:35 PM.

1. Timing of submission to the Selectboard of the draft Flood Resilience element to be added to the Town Plan: The third draft Flood Resilience element to be added to the Town Plan was discussed in general terms. Nancy will send Guy some specific editorial suggestions. **It was moved, seconded and passed unanimously to:** a) send the draft element to TRORC to review so they can indicate any portions of it that may be inconsistent with the regional flood resilience planning or offer any other suggestions; b) after TRORC's review send the draft to the Selectboard for review; c) ask the Selectboard to comment on the draft and ask that they work with the commission to move toward its prompt adoption.

2. Schedule for drafting a revised flood hazard ordinance: There was detailed discussion of the five elements the Town will have to satisfy by October 23, 2014 in order to qualify for full ERAF funding. These are described on page 7 of the draft Flood Resilience element:

- *For funding up to 12.5% of relief costs, communities must meet four mitigation measures:*
 1. *National Flood Insurance Program participation;*
 2. *Annual certification of Town Road and Bridge Standards as described in the current (2014-2016) VTrans Orange Book: Handbook for Local Officials;*
 3. *Adoption of a Local Emergency Operations Plan (to be adopted annually after the town meeting);*
 4. *A FEMA-approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (valid for five years) or submission of a draft plan to FEMA Region 1 for review.*
- *For funding of up to 17.5% of relief costs, communities must meet the 12.5% funding criteria and:*
 5. *Protect river corridors from new encroachment or protect mapped flood hazard areas from new encroachments and participate in the FEMA Community Rating System (CRS).*

It was agreed that these should be brought to the Selectboard's attention when they review the draft. It was noted that the first three of these elements are matters the Town already complies with but very likely will need to update for full compliance. The commission was uncertain whether the Town is in compliance with the fourth element. The fifth element, in effect, requires revision of our present flood hazard ordinance.

By the next meeting: a) members will review the present ordinance; b) Guy will send members the State's Model Six template for review; c) Guy will contact the DEC's Rivers Program and see if they have or will have a revised floodplain map for West Fairlee. Guy will review the State's latest map and look for areas where we may have to go into the field to see if it will be necessary for us to propose further specific revisions of the map.

There was a detailed discussion of the relationship of FEMA's SFHA boundaries (ca. 1981) and the State Of Vermont's FEH zone boundaries as mapped in 2013. Along the Ompompanoosuc River/Schoolhouse Brook corridor and the Middle Brook corridor, respectively, the SFHA boundaries almost entirely encompass the FEH boundaries and extend farther upstream. Along the Blood Brook Corridor, the SFHA and FEH boundaries differ in lateral extent and the FEH areas extend much farther upstream. There was preliminary discussion of how the SFHA and FEH boundaries might be handled in a revised ordinance, and of practical considerations related to flood insurance, site development and construction, and mitigation of current and future risks to landowners, property, and the community.

3. Advance notification under a revised ordinance by property owners in SFHAs and FEH areas of intention to build: there was a general discussion of the practical need for reasonable advance notice by a landowner (of both intention and specific plans) for new site development or construction activities, and general sentiment that advance notice requirements should apply to all and not only those in SFHAs and FEH zones.

4. Possible construction of a garage in the floodplain along Route 113: there is no new information on this matter. Geoff will ask Rhonda if she has heard anything further from this owner.

5. Shoreland Protection Act: Skip offered a brief and thorough review of the requirements of the act and some of the open questions that remain about it.

6. Bean Hall Site meeting of 26 June: discussion of the meeting and of the envisioning process was tabled till the August meeting.

Nota bene: Jane and Skip Brown will be moving to Burlington late in August. Therefore, our next meeting will be Skip's last. Commission members thanked Skip for his long service as a member and chair of the commission. We wished Skip and Jane well in their new home.

7. Adjourn: the meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.