

Notes from Public Forum, 11/1/2016

Present

Planning Commission members: Deb Forrett, Maria Glabach, Joe Little, Bev Tier, Sarah Bergh, Sam Farwell, Annmarie Pluhar

Public: Lynn Levine, Paul Normandeau, Bill Johnson, Richard Epstein, Bill Schmidt, Bill McKim, Cheryl Wilfong, Gurudham Khalsa,, Ruth Hoffman, Ruth Barton, Merrill Barton, Ed Anthes, Mary Ellen Copeland, Cindy Wilcox, Jonathan Royce, Susan Kern, Claudia Teachman, Frances Herbert, Paul Chapman, Alex Wilson, Molly Stoner

Kathleen Hathaway- Zoning Administrator,

Selectboard members: Zeke Goodband, Steve Glabach, Hugh Worden, Jerelyn Wilson

Intro by Sam Farwell of the meeting

Review of chapters of the plan to determine interest

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Paul Normandeau - comparing income...Dummerston residents compared to state and county figures? Average Dummerston income is below \$50k.

Zeke Goodband - town does not provide wages to health officer

Jerlyn Wilson - town employees road foreman and crew - not road workers or specific number of employees.

Ruth Hoffman - what is difference between employee and elected officials - providing wages as elected; because taxes taken out. Make 2 sentences that address difference.

LAND USE

Paul Normandeau - why remove reference to total acreage in town of Dummerston? Sam – to edit the plan and remove redundancies.

Gurudham Khalsa - why remove connecting habitats overlay?

Lynn Levine - suggests putting it back in. Provided graph of potential animal movement. Red is most critical meaning it is where the potential is for animals to cross; green is less crossing. Vt Fish & Game map.

Bill McKim - animal crossing corridors are important for the animals to move around and breed.

Richard Epstein - more map discussion. Map provided is the potential of animal movement not actual movement.

Cindy Wilcox - is town ready to consider overlays agricultural conservation areas?

Cheryl Wilfong - corridors are important for people – animals in compost (bears) – need to protect us from the bears. And protect the animals.

Sam – changed the zoning maps but didn't include the overlays.

Lynn Levine – page 17 talks to the issues and page 20; other towns in Vt are doing overlays.

Paul Normandeau – why contention about the overlays?

Sam – simply another layer of issues that didn't get addressed? People needed to understand how it affected zoning.

Gurudham Khalsa – leave in the overlays for future discussions and bylaws.

Paul Normandeau - Jody Normandeau emailed comments re same to keep in the overlays.

Richard Epstein – “unfragmented blocks” - change to field and forest or unfragmented blocks of land?

Lynn Levine - animals tend to not be in open areas; are more in wooded areas.

WORKING LANDSCAPE

Bill Schmidt - pg 22 “2009” sb 2016.

Agricultural land- 1700 acres hidden jewel of Dummerston; ref to “LESA”.

Evaluates agricultural soils according to viability to grow crops...referenced other studies he had been a part of discussing agricultural lands and what soils they are made up of.

Wants to put the paragraph back into the plan.

Zeke Goodband - suggests referencing the report and where it is available.

Deb Forrett – there is more recent data than LESA – this info is dated.

Bill McKim - how can a soil analysis be dated?

Deb Forrett – the newer report has soil ratings from 2006.

Ed Anthes - para about LESA stay in; edited edition. Opposes pg 22 and 23 deletions of removal re Dummerston soils. He read at length from written notes.

Page 25 changed not deleted to review the LESA study.

Bill Schmidt – response to Zeke.

Lynn Levine – what is the site Deb referenced?

Deb Forrett - natural resources farmland classification system for vt soils of 2006: nrb.state.vt.us.

Paul Normandeau – also wants to keep LESA in the plan; 1/3 soils 2/3 cultural, local factors...soils don't change; the other factors change. Reevaluate LESA and keep in plan? Effective tool to promote agricultural and protect it from development.

Sam – asked Zeke to explain.

Zeke – wants reference to LESA but make it more concise.

Hugh Warden – new residents probably won't reference the town plan to investigate the soil.

Molly Stoner – suggests appendix referencing the LESA but not within the plan.

Bill Johnson – in favor of objective info summarized re soils in the plan. One farm omitted Full Plate Farm on page 22.

Sam – example of when LESA was used?

Bill Schmidt – Bunker Farm project and another project in the works.

Mary Ellen Copeland – referenced LESA study for private purchase.

Richard Epstein – also add New Leaf CSA? CSA's are referenced elsewhere in the plan.

Ed Anthes – to avoid leaving out farms use standard criteria used by other agencies.

Sam – is there significance of naming all the farms?

Zeke – instead of naming all farms reference # of farms, CSA's etc.

Ruth Barton – just say there are “many farms in town”.

Lynn Levine – soils maps are not readily available on line.

Paul Normandeau – pge 23 re crossed out paragraph – why?

Sam - Rewrote para on next page.

CONSERVED AND PUBLICALLY OWNED LANDS

Alex Wilson – pg 27 Nature Conservancy Land now owns over 1000 acres. Confirm with Nature Conservancy or Listers.

Paul Normandeau – pg 26 agri tourism permitted will it continue. Add “Conditionally permit”.

Lynn Levine – pg 27 add further reference to how important Black Mountain area is; Lynn will draft a sentence.

Secretary note: Here is sentence handed to me at meetings end: Black Mountain is a unique geological feature, the only granite in Windham county. It supports several plant species that are rare for Windham County.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Lynn Levine – pg 30 why delete flood plain?

Sam – because there is a chapter dedicated to it.

FLOOD RESILIENCE

Sam - Pg 44 lot of help from WRC staff write this chapter. Meets statutory requirement.

Lynn Levine - pg 24 para 2 objects to “shorter “trees” reference: leads to fewer species and lower regeneration. Strike shorter trees.

Jerelyn Wilson – pg 46 local hazard mitigation plan – link?

Sam – Dummerston does not have a plan yet.

Deb – reference can be made in the town plan to the hazard mitigation plan.

RECREATION

Paul Normandeau – pg 48 last para last sentence – none on state reg of historic places?

Sarah – mentioned in other areas of the plan.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Bill Johnson – pg 52 3rd para; minor edit.

Page 57 social service agency – mention Dummerston Cares...referenced the mission statement and wants to have included. He emailed to the board.

Bill Schmmidt – pg 54. Hiking trail passes through [town] right of way off Park Laughton road.

Molly Stoner – page 57. Add reference to church and school funded services?

Richard Eptein – Add Green Mtn Camp for Girls 100th year in 2017.

Paul Normandeau – pg 55. Change to: Town owns approx. 2 acres of land on the west side of the covered bridge on route 30.

Jerelyn Wilson – page 56 SOLID WASTE – stay tuned...vote this month at Windham Solid Waste.

TRANSPORTATION

Bill Johnson – pg 64 last para re transportation- options home to med appts...Dummerston Cares will have rides to appts in full operation/service. Might want to add in this para.

Ed Anthes – revisit Green Mtn Camp reference on pg 47– will Richard Epstein submit reference to camps longevity of same?

Ruth Barton – sounds like the town plan is an advertisement for entities in town; not the purpose of the plan.

Sam – didn't talk about vision of the town plan. Town Plan is a visionary document.

Ruth – people are concerned that things will be left out.

Cindy Wilcox – the town plan is “what is” not what you want it to be.

Gurudham Khalsa – air bnb's – any discussion on the commission?

Deb – yes it has been discussed tonight by the planning commission.

Sam – might not be put in the plan.

Deb – will discuss with other town officials.

Molly Stoner – structure of plan – two documents (plan and information referenced). Make clear which is which. Thinks plan as is difficult to read.

Sam – some of format is required by state.

Jerelyn Wilson – other towns have better formats of plans.

Ed Anthes – some sections are missing vision references.

Jerelyn Wilson – vision is aspiration not guideline.

Alex Wilson – editing (reformatting) and revising the town plan might be better done in 8 years.

Deb – not a hearing; public forum only. More opportunities for further discussion.

Sam – should have more finalized draft at 2017 town meeting. Further forums in future. Finalize draft by next June?

Meeting adjourned at 8:30.

Submitted by Tina Harris

Submitted by Jodi Normandeau

Sam - as I will be at the school board meeting tonight I am jotting down some comments on the proposed Town Plan.

Page 12 -why take out the number of acres In Dummerston out. It is an interesting fact that should be in Plan

Page 17 - where I can see that "connecting Habitat overlay" might not belong here, I sure hope you consider it elsewhere along with other overlays, particularly agricultural lands (I believe this was promised last year)

Page 20 -iii -allow only as conditional uses

Page 21 - policy 3.2 - are you planning on just eliminating this or re- working it. I would be very Against having no restrictions or control in Plan

PAGE 22 -I am not in favor of taking out the LESA information. It is very important as ACT 250 uses it. We have some of the best agricultural soils in Vermont. The way the world is going is very important to keep our agricultural soils. States with a water issue may no longer be able to feed this country and we may need all the food we can gain locally.

Page25- Action step a. Same as above.

Page 26 - action step b -change continue to permit to continue to conditionally permit

Page 26 - action step c - do Not take out the last part. It should be left in.

In addition to these comments, I would like to add comments about Agro-tourism. I have no issue with agricultural programs etc but I do have issue with non agricultural programs. The neighborhood and accessibility of where these farms are located and where the activities take place needs to be carefully looked at so as To not impinge of the quality of life of home owners .