



Dummerston Planning Commission

Public Forum on Town Plan Update (7/25/17 draft)

7:00 pm, Tuesday, August 29, 2017

Dummerston Congregational Church

Present

Planning Commissioners: Joe Little(Chair), Bev Tier, Annamarie Pluhar, Maria Glabach, Sarah Bergh, Deb Forreth, Sam Farwell, Nicole Talbot, Brian Richardson

Public: Zeke Goodband, Bill Schmidt, Merrill Barton, Ruth Barton, Mary Ellen Copeland, Sally Fegley, Steve Tavella, John Dunn, Dan Hughes, Bill Johnson, Sarah Levine, Jerelyn Wilson

Joe Little called meeting to order at 7:00. Introduced the town plan update and explained the purpose of the public forum.

Joe read written comments from Jody Normandeau (included at end of these notes) and opened up the meeting for comments.

Bill Schmidt asked about the definition of “general welfare” in Community Facilities, Goal 1, and whether it implied town funding of social service organizations. He referred to a recent Selectboard meeting where this issue came up for debate.

Zeke Goodband reported on the SB meeting and said the discussion on budgeting contributions to social service organizations had not yet been resolved.

Ruth Barton mentioned the need for water-runoff ditches on dirt roads (see J.N. comments on road maintenance below)

Jerelyn Wilson asked if there were sections of the plan that were difficult for the planning commission to update because they covered contentious issues.

Mary Ellen Copeland proposed to add an action step under Goal 1, Policy 1.3 of Ecological Landscape. Joe asked if she would send the PC her draft wording (see below)

Zeke asked about schedule of the update adoption.

The PC will finalize the draft for a formal public hearing and set the date- probably late October or November. Assuming the PC makes no significant changes after the hearing, it will send the draft to the selectboard for consideration. The SB will schedule a public hearing at their convenience after which they may vote to adopt the plan.

Hearing no more comments, Joe adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:30.

Written comments from Jody Normandeau:

I have read the proposed plan and have two areas of concern. One is ground water control and the other is Agritourism.

Ground water:

I feel that the 50' buffer around rivers and stream should be required. Our brooks, wetlands and rivers are being filled up runoff soils and gravel as well as being polluted with chemicals from agriculture and residential lawns. Having trees, shrubs, grasses and weeds help to clean whatever the run off is. I also would like to see the Town come up with policies for the town road crew to follow so there are not cut outs, ditches and easy runoff into our streams. I would also like to see the sides of our roads planted in grass which would help control the runoff. I feel that the proposed plan is not strict enough in any of these areas.

Agritourism:

I am a big proponent of our agriculture. However when it comes to agritourism, I feel that activities that are not connected to agriculture should be strongly controlled or they can easily get way out of control. Noise, traffic, pollution, hours of operation, frequency of operation and neighborhoods should be considered over profit. The Town Plan should be strong and clear enough to give the ZBA exact guidelines to follow in their deliberations.

Thank you for listening. Other than these comments, I feel the plan does share a good Town vision.

Sincerely,
Jody Normandeau
250 Tucker Reed Road

Wording from Mary Ellen Copeland in follow-up email:
(p. 46 – proposed wording in italics)

Policy 1.3 Minimize visual impacts of ridgeline development by ensuring that development is located and designed in a manner that protects the uninterrupted skyline.

Action Step

*Identify town ridgelines, develop a ridgeline overlay district map, and prepare descriptions of ridgeline attributes to facilitate decision-making about ridgeline development.
(Conservation Commission)*

Action Step

Investigate options to control the design and siting of development on ridgelines. (Planning Commission)