

The Planning Commission submitted a Draft Town Plan to the Selectboard in June, after holding a Public Hearing in May. After several meetings, including a Public Hearing on August 26<sup>th</sup>, the Selectboard voted not to accept the Draft Plan. By the time you read this, the Selectboard will have held four work sessions to decide what changes it wants made to the Draft Plan and will have made recommendations to the Planning Commission. The next step is for the Planning Commission to revise the Plan and arrive at a second draft, which will then go through a public hearing process at both the Planning Commission and Selectboard level.

On the main, the public hearing process this summer worked just as it should, as an opportunity for opinions, concerns, and comments to be aired. But there were also criticisms of the Planning Commission, along the lines of “why didn’t they get more information?” and “why didn’t they ask us what we thought?” After working for seven years to gather the information used to create the Draft Plan, obtaining over \$20,000 in state funds to help us with that process, and holding multiple Public Forums to elicit input on the Land Use section, it was tough for planning commissioners to hear those accusations.

In May 2007, the Planning Commission sent every town resident a brochure outlining the Land Use vision for the Town Plan. At that point, we had gathered enough data to develop a vision based on the priorities expressed by residents and on how the land in Dummerston was currently being used. We were anxious to get public reaction to the vision, and the roughly 50 people who gave comments helped us immensely. We believe that anyone who looked at that brochure or who came to the follow-on Forum in June 2007 could not have been surprised by the Land Use section of 2009 Draft Town Plan. The information was there for everyone to see and react to, two years before the public hearing stage.

For those who think that the Planning Commission should have done more, we agree that there is always more work to be done, by us and by you. As an all-volunteer board, we do not have the capability to go door-to-door and talk with everyone in town. We rely on monthly meetings, surveys, brochures, forums, workshops, articles in The Views, and the public hearings to share our work and get your opinions. We can (and do) ask for your input, but you have the responsibility to provide it. To that end, we thank the many people who took the time to come to our Forums, to submit comments and to give testimony at the hearings.

The Planning Commission meets monthly at the Town Office, typically on the first Tuesday of the month at 5 pm. You can write us at 1523 Middle Road, Dummerston VT 05346 or e-mail us at [townclerk@dummerston.org](mailto:townclerk@dummerston.org). We also have a page on the Town website ([www.dummerston.org](http://www.dummerston.org)) where we post our minutes and other information.