

Dummerston Planning Commission

Notes on Public Forum June 10, 2013

Route 30 and Route 5 Corridors, Town Plan District Mapping

Moderator: Cindy Jerome:

Attendees: Planning Commission: Sam Farwell, Bill Schmidt, Rich Cogliano, Annamarie Pluhar, Bev Tier,

Absent: Andrew MacFarland, Deb Forrett, Cindy Wilcox

Public: Bradford Greene, R.H. Barton, Patty Walier, Lynn Levine, Nelson Jilson, Claudia Teachman, George and Emilia Houghton, Deb and Charlie Titus, Jody Normandeau, Pater Barrett, Beverly Kenney, Clyde Johnson, Ed Anthes, Charlotte Annis, Zeke Goodband, Steve and Maria Glabach, Laurie Garland, Sam Garland, John Warren, Vern Grubinger, Ruth Hoffman, Suzanne Weinberg, Bill Johnson, Greg Brown

Introduction, purpose of the meeting is for questions and answers – is not a public hearing.

Sam starts by explaining the process and maps so far.

Discussion

Bradford Greene: Read a written statement requesting district map be Rural Residential. (attached)

Deb Titus: Questions, what is “Resource” and “economic values” in the description of “Resource”? Word “resource” conjures up a host of ideas, not such a clear word. Sweet Tree Farm is conserved and thinks that parcel should be in Conservation. “Resource is a nebulous terrible word.”

Vern Grubinger: Clarification.. “potential for productive agricultural or forestry uses” first sentence is quite clear.

Clyde Johnson: Why one area rural and not the other two? And vice versa?

Greg: Challenge for Town Plan is internal consistency in the use of language. Suggests “conservation district” for land that is in fact conserved.

Vern: “Conservation” is about natural resources, while “resource” is people are using the land for economic activity.

John Warren: Why isn't Dutton Pines in Conservation?

Steve Glabach: Dutton Pines will be logged and used for forestry so it is a “resource.”

Bev Tier: Asked what the problem is with the definition of Sweet Tree Farm. Answer: Would like it to be “farmland” something that says what it is.

Ruth Barton: USA has 19 definitions of the word “rural.”

Jody Normandeau: This is not dealing with what is on the ground. RC district moves too far in on Middle Road, Houghton Road, Johnson's Curve, etc. Still lots of housing, make it smaller on the west side. Doesn't protect our ag lands, doesn't take into consideration

that Route 5 is a scenic corridor. There isn't much for housing, should be something along Route 5 where it is close to transportation. More development could increase our taxes. This map is not consistent with our Town Plan.

Beverly Kenney: Our taxes are lowest because we are in the sweet spot for commercial development. The campground as a business does support the local farms and businesses. Wants that if she were ever to expand that the area would be amenable to the type of business she is doing.

Greg says we need to maintain that sweet spot.

Vern: Not easy with competing interests. Dummerston has small amount of actual ag land, please look at LESA list, to see what the future for agriculture actually is. Asks about the Rural designation on the East side of covered bridge.

Bill Johnston: Asks about viability of future agriculture.

Vern: Best ag land is in lots of different districts.

Reed Miller: We have to work really hard to meet the needs of all the different elements in the town. Task the DPC has is "Not enviable"

Clyde Johnson: Suggests we ride the road. How do we define "Commercial"? Don't saddle people by telling them what they can't do, be careful what we wish for, and what we control.

Ed Anthes: Number of things I like about the map, some things I'd like to see, would like the soil studies to count. Johnson's Curve and Canoe Brook should be Residential as they have residences there. Support Jack Mannix on Resource for his farm.

Suzanne: What is the state planning for altering Route 5? Answer: Just happening in Brattleboro.

Peter Barrett: We are the largest piece of land shifting out of rural commercial. We don't want to have it changed. It could also be good commercial land.

Greg: Specific suggestions.

1) North of Route 5, recommends that it be moved back to Residential. As the Housing Advisory Commission recommended. Potential for easy access.

2) Dummerston Station Road. Recommends straighten it out and remove Rural Commercial

3) Follow Jack Mannix's request.

Bill Johnston: Could all that RC south of Stickney Brook be conservation. Why isn't the area at the border Resource, or something other than RC.

Clyde Johnson: Remember that you are planning for the town of Dummerston, don't zone per owner request. Be real careful.

Nelson Jillson: A Town Plan is a wish list. We should listen to what the land owners want.

Jody Normandeau: Route 30 top part on the corner, asks why isn't all Residential. What do the definitions really mean? Wants Dummerston not to have what happened to Putney Road in Brattleboro. It wasn't planned, so development just moved in.

John Warren: Route 5 is best land for ag, housing, development, factories, roads..which one do we really want to do?

Ruth Barton: Land is not great at the corner of Route 5 and Houghton.

Greg Brown: Suggestion about Residential at Putney line is a forward looking idea more concerned about that land after/when it gets put on the market. We are talking about the future 10-15 years not current use.

George Houghton: Putney Road, two farms taken over for development because there was no money in the farming. It wasn't feasible for them to farm anymore.

Bill Schmidt: There is an agricultural renaissance going on, could Vern make some comments about that?

Vern: Work with young people making really good livings doing agricultural. There are stories told – high tunnel green house structures. 12 food hubs, hospitals, schools, etc buying local. It's a huge boom. Strength in our local food systems can be really important, drought and floods in Midwest. Help a farmer get a fair price is a great way to go. We need to grow more of our food. These young people are running businesses.. direct to the stores, not commodity farms. We need to be thoughtful about where we give up the ag land resource.

Submitted by Annamarie Pluhar, Secretary