

Royalton Planning Commission

APPROVED – Minutes

Monday, November 8, 2010

Members Attending: Beguin, Brandau, Judge, Levasseur

Guests Attending: Christian Petrangelo (Note Taker)

Meeting came to order at 7:01 PM.

1. Meeting Minutes of October 11, 2010

- Brandau moved to accept minutes. Judge seconded. Motion carries.

2. GW Plastics

- Levasseur reiterated Linda Madison's statement that the applicant was already permitted for this type of expansion in 2001. There may be new traffic, but not impermissibly more based on prior approval.
 - Brandau countered that these permits expire, and one must reapply.
 - Beguin added that it could have been an amendment.
- Levasseur stated that GW Plastics does not plan to change its policy.

3. Luna Bleu

- Levasseur discussed barn photovoltaics, which involve the public service board and net metering.
- Beguin asked whether a new barn is being put up. Levasseur responded yes.
- Beguin asked whether the barn is subject to Act 250. Levasseur responded no.
- Levasseur clarified that RPC cannot do anything further on this issue at this time.

4. CVPS

- Levasseur said that the Central VT Public Service Corporation plans to change lines, discontinuing some that go through the woods and adding others elsewhere.
- Beguin stated that utility lines now tend to be placed along roads for easier access.
 - Judge added that the goal here is to service every pole from a truck.

5. Driveway Access, Mastine

- Levasseur described the area at issue as a small, hilly road, with the driveway located on the brow of a small hill. It seems like the best spot, because one can see expansively from both directions. No foreseeable problems.

- Beguin moved to approve the application for driveway access. Brandau seconded. Motion carries.

6. RPC Budget

- Levasseur presented last year's budget sheet as a guide for this year's requests.
- Brandau moved to approve last year's budget figures for this year. All in favor. Motion carries.
- Brandau moved to amend this year's request to list \$299 for advertising, for a grand total of \$7,700. All in favor. Motion carries.

7. VT Smart Growth Scorecard

- Beguin began where RPC left off last time: "Public Access to Open Spaces, Informal or Formal," p. 8. Does the public have easy access to parks from other parts of the town/village?
 - Beguin stated that we have parks and playgrounds, but we cannot reach them easily. People must drive. This should get a rating of "2."
- Levasseur addressed local access to open spaces, suggesting a "3."
- Beguin inquired about future access to open spaces.
 - Levasseur commented that no specific plans exist. Circa "2.5."
- Brandau asked how local regulations provide for open space.
 - Judge replied that they do not, suggesting a "1." This places the town in "smart growth" transitional status for this category.
- Beguin recommended that RPC consider conditional uses for proposed recreational areas.
 - Levasseur that we need to find a way to open up that dialogue with people.
- Brandau offered that maintaining public access to rivers and ponds is imperative.
 - Beguin stated that RPC must keep in mind how development impacts open, public spaces. People may cordon off their land down the road.
- Levasseur, referencing p. 9, asked where most development in town is located. She thought outlying areas, including farmland and a lot in the woods.
 - Brandau agreed that most new construction takes place in outlying areas.
 - Levasseur recommended a rating of "1."
- Levasseur inquired whether there is town support for agricultural businesses.
 - Brandau suggested a "2" since the town has lost many such stores.
 - Beguin confirmed that there is no local feed store anymore, although Welch's recently got grain.
- Brandau asked what strategies we have for protecting farmland.
 - Levasseur said that there is general encouragement in town.
 - Beguin added that current tax structure does not incentivize protection.
 - Judge said that only Act 250 and the town plan influence this area.
 - Levasseur suggested a rating of "1."
- Levasseur asked whether town plan locates/zones agricultural soils and farmland, including densities of development. Brandau offered a "2."
- Levasseur inquired about conservation easement and land trust activity.

- All members generally recommended a “2.”
- Levasseur, referencing p. 10, asked which option best describes the mix of housing options in town, e.g. affordable housing, senior housing, etc.
 - Brandau referenced the mobile park home by the law school and the senior housing in town. A “3” is best.
- Beguin asked how the town plan approaches future housing needs?
 - Brandau said that we talked about turning Freck’s into affordable housing.
 - Levasseur recommended a “2” given prior discussion.
- Brandau asked how local regulations have accommodated diverse housing needs.
 - All members generally settled on a “2.”
- Levasseur wondered if town works with an affordable housing group? All: “2.”
- Brandau added that this places Royalton in the “transition” category again.
- Beguin inquired about business and community centers.
 - All members generally recommended a “3.”
- Levasseur asked about how town supports town business, recalling loan program.
 - Brandau said that parking seems to be an issue lately.
 - Levasseur stated that we have a downtown plan, but it has not been implemented. A “3” makes sense.
 - Brandau inquired if local zoning encourages this goal. Yes.
 - Brandau asked if local groups also encourage, deciding on a “2.”
- Levasseur inquired how active the community is in the planning process. “2.”
- Judge inquired about the scorecard’s purpose.
 - Beguin explained that it seeks to evaluate the town bylaws from a smart growth perspective.
- Levasseur asked about societies, e.g. conservation groups. Examples include John Dunville Committee and CDC (Judge). “3.”
- Judge predicted that greatest impact on Royalton’s character will be rail changes.
 - Discussion ensued about rail development and bridges.
- Brandau reported a total score of 95.5—right in the middle of “in transition.” He asked if he should call the VT Forum on Sprawl / VT League of Cities and Towns concerning a proposed land development bylaw.
 - Beguin replied that development conditions and open space issues should be addressed in the future.
- Judge added that the changes would still need to be passed.
- Levasseur said that current politics surrounding regulation make this unlikely.
- Beguin added that we should still submit the work so it is there for the future.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting ended at 8:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christian Petrangelo
christian.petrangelo@gmail.com