

## Townshend Planning Commission

### Minutes

### Minutes August 28, 2024

- Present:** John Evans, Bob DeSiervo, Rick Matschke, Liza Martin and Andrew Snelling
- 1. Call to Order:** Chair Evans called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.
  - 2. Additions and Deletions:** Snelling requested adding discussion of the use of Zoom under new business and taking up the Town Hall first under Old Business. DeSiervo asked to have Windham & Windsor Housing Trust added under New Business. There were no objections.
  - 3. Members of the Public:** none
  - 4. Approval of Minutes:** DeSiervo moved, and Matschke seconded a motion to approve the minutes for the July 24, 2024 meeting with correction to the dates of future meetings. The motion passed.
  - 5. Correspondence:** none
  - 6. Old Business:**

Town Hall: Snelling called the Commissioners' attention to the estimate from Thaler, Riley, Wilson Architects. He noted that the \$ 25,500 total cost was much more than the estimate from Keefe Wesner, but that it covered a substantial amount for design work and also construction administration. Wesner is already familiar with the project and has done some preliminary design work and has not proposed to provide construction administration. Evans described his meeting with Peter Welch from Cotton Design. He stated that Peter Welch had said it was a simple project. Cotton Design did not provide a written or verbal estimate of their cost for preparing plans, bid specifications and an RFP.

DeSiervo made a motion, seconded by Martin, to proceed with Keefe and Wesner based on their \$5,800 estimate.

The Commissioners discussed the contemplated project and the three architects proposals. Evans expressed that it was a simple project and didn't see the need to pay an architect. Snelling shared his perspective on the need for clear bid documents so that the Town would know what they were getting and that all potential contractors would be quoting the same specifications. Matschke and Martin expressed that the work needs to be code complaint and that there are lots of very specific dimensions in the code. DeSiervo added that we do need to get it right.

DeSiervo called the question which was seconded by Martin. The motion to call the question passed with Evans abstaining.

The motion to proceed with Keefe & Wesner passed with four in favor and one against.

DeSiervo, agreed to inform the Select Board about the estimates and the Planning Commission's decision to proceed

with Wesner. He will then contact Keefe and Wesner.

Town Plan: Snelling read the list of sections that the various Commissioners had agreed to review. He mentioned that Balantine had informed he would be ready to talk about Flood resilience at the next meeting. He noted, energy was waiting data from WRC and a draft of the Forestry chapter was discussed at last meeting. Snelling asked how the Commission wanted to proceed on going through and approving the updated sections. Matschke commented that the land use zones didn't define a housing area. He further suggested that the Designated Village Center for the East Village should include the Valley Villages. Snelling said that it had been proposed but had been turned down by the Dept. of Housing and Community Development because not part of the historical village center and not connected by sidewalks. DeSiervo stated that WRC hasn't provided the information from the 2020 census and the community assessment which is needed to move forward. There was a discussion about the forestry chapter and Act 171 requirements and how to get the section completed. DeSiervo mentioned road kill as a method to identify wildlife road crossing areas. Matschke said that he was aware of an area of old growth forest and inquired about if it was appropriate to include on maps and what is the process for adding it.

Snelling summarized the action steps. He will contact Mike McConnell about energy data and community assessment (2020 census data). Matschke will research the rules on special areas like rare or uncommon animals, state threatened, rare or uncommon plants and significant natural communities. All the Commissioners will review the draft forest chapter and look at changes to reflect the unique situation of Townshend which is mostly listed as high priority or priority forest blocks.

## **7. New Business:**

Zoom use: Snelling reported that the Zoom license used for remote video connection is expiring and asked if it should be renewed. There was a discussion on how it has been used in the past year. Snelling made a motion, seconded by DeSiervo to renew the zoom license for another year at a cost of \$160. The motion passed.

Windham Windsor Housing Trust: DeSiervo reported that he met with a representative from Windham Windsor Housing Trust at Taft Meadow to discuss affordable housing needs in the area and possible locations as part of the information gathering for the updated Town Plan.

- 8. Meeting Schedule:** Regular Meeting: September 11, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m.  
Regular Meeting: September 25, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m.
  
- 9. Adjournment:** Chair, Evans, seeing no further business to come before the Commission, adjourned the meeting at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Andrew Snelling