

Town of Guilford
Planning Commission Meeting Notes—draft
6:00 pm – 7:30 pm Monday, January 18, 2021
by zoom and conference call

PC members attending: Jethro Eaton, Thayer Tomlinson, Jackie Gaines, Nathanael Matthiesen, Tanya Balsley

Call to order: 6:10 pm

Recognition of Public: Zon Eastes, Linda Lembke, Sara Coffey

An update from State Rep. Sara Coffey:

- Sara noted that the session recently started but is working remotely. She was just made vice-chair of the Committee on Corrections and Institutions.
- Heard about challenges on how to get the Town Plan passed and noted that the state has passed legislation on how to get information passed; she said there is a lot of support for municipalities as well as flexibility on getting things moved through towns.
- Act 250 Bill: She said that a new Act 250 bill is in motion again. Governor just issued an executive order on how Act 250 will be implemented. There will likely be some tension between economic development and environmental protection.
 - Jethro asked how with Guilford having no zoning, we rely on Act 250 for a safely measure for protection on growth and development. How might changes to Act 250 effect the town? Sara noted that there are many projects that trigger Act 250. Sara noted that the Broad Brook Community Center has likely had more hurdles due to the lack of zoning in the town since then Act 250 has precedence.
 - He then asked about examples of light zoning that may make any changes to a building in Guilford more feasible (compared to Act 250). Sara suggested contacting Windham Regional for resources on zoning, how to think about development, and examples from other towns throughout the state. She can help connect with resources.
- When talking about passing the Town Plan, Sara asked what the Planning Commission needs to move the Town Plan forward.
 - Michelle noted that our next step is finalizing what we have now and get it mailed to all residents, so they can respond to portions of the plan and really need to have as many people can respond. Jackie agreed with this. Need to have community involvement.
 - Sara noted that the legislature has created tools to help towns move town plans forward if they want to.
 - Jethro asked about ways to get the community more involved even without meeting in person – how to keep community involvement to more strongly forward in a positive direction with the town plan.

Discussion with Linda Lembke: Community Values Mapping

- Representing the Conservation Commission and spoke about Community Values Mapping – looking to hold sessions in Guilford. This has been done in towns around VT to bring residents together to talk about what they value in their town. Linda shared an example from the Town on Monkton.
- Dept of Fish and Wildlife comes with large table-sized maps and residents look at maps and talk about what they care about and map those items for their towns. These maps can then be used in the town planning process and look at opportunities for new trails and recreation.
- Guilford had dates scheduled for late March 2020 and then things were on hold. Fish and Wildlife is working on an online version – did a test run in November in another town. Used a combination of Zoom and Miro to test a remote mapping opportunity.
- There were a lot of discussions on how to get as many people to participate as possible – both online and how to do live event mapping at a large community map.
- The Conservation Commission would like to move forward – Linda is asking if the Planning Commission would like to partner on this for early March. The live session would last about 2 hours but most participants stuck with the process as it was very active.
- Tanya suggested this is a fantastic idea to get back in touch and come together as a community. Nathanael agreed as a way to get people more involved; Jethro agreed. Thayer noted that it is a great way to test outreach for the town plan. Jackie worried if the maps would confine landowners to more regulation.
- Linda highlighted that the process is not a process for regulation but an opportunity to hear more voices – hear more people highlight what they value. It is up to the Conservation Commission and Planning Commission to use the maps for our own purposes. Jackie asked Linda to follow up with more information.
- Michelle asked for a vote to proceed with having the Planning Commission partner with the Conversation Commission on hosting a community values mapping process. Jackie abstained. Tanya, Jethro, Thayer, Michelle, and Nathanael voted yes.
- Linda asked for a spokesperson for the planning process for the next 3 weeks – Jethro and Jackie offered to serve in the planning process; Tanya would also like to join the planning zoom meetings.
- Here is the link for Monkton’s Community Values Mapping website: <https://www.mccvm.com/>
- Pawlet’s report: <https://pawlet.vt.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Pawlet-Community-Values-Mapping-Report.pdf>

Town Plan discussion and next steps

1. Education – Jethro will send to Thayer
2. Hazard Mitigation Plan – Michelle will send to Thayer
3. Waste Management – Jethro will send to Thayer
4. Energy Portion – Thayer will update
5. Public Participation section

6. Language finalization
7. Timing on addition of maps, other information – Michelle will reach out to Jeff at Windham Regional

Other Business

- Selectboard update – Zon noted that SelectBoard is finishing the budget and we should be receiving the town warning soon.
- Zon is the SelectBoard liaison of the Deerfield Valley communications district to put together a plan to secure high speed internet for every home and every business in this district.

Close of Meeting: Meeting ended 7:29 pm; *next meeting February 15, 2021 at 6 pm*

The January 2021 Planning Commission meeting recording is available online at:
<https://zoom.us/rec/share/NyyO7Er3XHTYJH7MGhXXDKhrIc2BjtUgHS8UazMaLNLyIi0bx0ZT18eZaLdXX4vj.G8ajWII1cslh4H0D?startTime=1611011385000>

The November 2020 Planning Commission meeting recording is available online at:
https://zoom.us/rec/share/r6l5W_p-9pzdjU_m4He1caJh2FirZhfZowjriE-59n1wsyfdclGctdrKjGjFiN7.I6yFZq3ze9Hhz2N6