

Planning Commission Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
March 20, 2012

Present: Kris Perlee, Sue Kavanagh, Chico Martin, Ken Weston, Skimmer Hellier, John Elder, Bill Sayre

Others: Mary Arbuckle, NEAT TV, Jen Stetson

Public: None Present

Chico called the meeting to order at 7:03

Ken moved to approve the February 22, 2012 minutes, John seconded all were in favor, so voted.

Ken moved to approve the March 6, 2012 minutes, Skimmer seconded, all were in favor, so voted.

Chico discussed the rest of the agenda for the meeting, specifically about policies and procedures as well as future zoning matters. Chico suggested that the group discuss policy and procedure based on the length they have served on a board. From this discussion, the board will create a handbook to use throughout future meetings.

Ken was concerned with exefficio members and their participation with the board. He suggested setting up subcommittees so one person didn't have to handle all the paper work all the time. Ken thought the group should participate in the concept that any member can move to suspend the rules, which includes any time when a board member wants to override someone else's agenda made, 2/3's of the group must agree to override the decision according to the rule. In regards to public input, he would like to have it both after administrative matter/minute approval, as well as at the end of the meeting. Ken also felt the Planning Commission should encourage the public to print what they are planning to speak about and create a bookbinder of all of these statements for something to refer to. Lastly, Ken thought that when positions are given to each board member that they should make a list with new priorities for themselves based on the position given. Ex: "Consider the pros and cons of subdivision regulations."

The group then discussed making a recommendation to the Selectboard for a Development Review Board.

The board discussed the chair not having a bias throughout the meeting, while Chico gave his personal experience on the matter. While discussing the role of the chair the position of vice-chair took place and the responsibilities of this position. The group then discussed the decision of no one person re-write, write, or bring something in without working with someone else. By doing this it helps create a feeling of cooperation, as well as demonstrates a better process.

Bill thought the group chose a target amount of time that generally made sense for public input, wouldn't be something that the board would have to use, but would divide the time evenly amongst the people who wanted to speak not allowing any one person to speak for more than 5 minutes.

Chico talked about his discussion with someone from Vermont Leagues of Cities and Towns, specifically about public comment. The public that attends the meetings is in actuality a small percentage of the town. By them continually attending meetings and expressing their opinion, it is reinforcing one particular viewpoint, when it in fact may not be the viewpoint of the entire town. The board discussed their representation of the town, while also managing their time properly.

Sue felt it was not only difficult to follow along not only as a board member, but also as a member of the public. She suggested a recap on what was completed at the end of the meeting to demonstrate to the public what happened throughout the meeting. By doing this it could reduce some of the feeling that the public is out of touch, or make it easier for the public to understand what is going on. Sue discussed her opinion about public comment.

John liked the productiveness of breaking down into small groups to get past points that have created difficulty for the board. He also agreed with Ken's statement regarding the change of agenda. John then discussed his opinion regarding public comment particularly relating to Bill's proposal regarding an allotted amount of time for the public. He felt that public comment should be placed before any major decisions are made, and could allow the board to reconvene after public comment with a chance to discuss some of the concerns the public had addressed. John proposed in addition to one meeting per month, a retreat together, along with any members of the public, non-agenda driven meeting, which could be a very helpful place for public participation.

Chico reminded the group that email is a public document, so when emailing back and forth make sure that you cc: either the chair, vice chair, or the appropriate person. The same goes for if you get an email from the public in regards to the Planning Commission. The group wanted a written rule regarding email exchanges not only between public and board members but also between board members.

Kris discussed his thoughts on public comment, wanted to separate public comment from the meeting. Kris thought of workshop concept, similar to the retreat suggestion made by John. A loose agenda would be needed, but a time for the public to be able to have the question and answer aspect with the board. He also stressed the importance of coming prepared for the meetings.

The group then talked about adding open public meetings at the groups discretion each year strictly for Q&A for the public.

John and Chico are planning on creating a handbook for the group by the next meeting to give to the group to review.

Chico then discussed the next meeting and discussed the review of the zoning regulations. He suggested the group work off what has already been put in place. Thinking about a period being a year from November. The group then discussed the zoning that would be discussed in the future and how they were going to handle the discussion of the zones as well as the maps that the group is going to use.

Particularly in the discussion of zoning, they discussed updating the current land use map submitted with the Town Plan in the Appendix and comparing it to the current zoning map.

The group discussed where public comment would be placed at the next meeting, 15 minutes for public comment, and the chair noting that the time would be divided equally amongst those who wanted to speak.

Sue motioned to adjourn at 9:33, Kris seconded all were in favor so voted.