

Planning Commission Community Forum - Strafford Town Plan  
February 16, 2017

Present

Planning Commission: Steve Campbell, Chair; Steve Willbanks, Vice Chair; Donald Graham; John Echeverria; Mike Scanlan; Martha Walke, Sec't.

Community Members: Anne Peyton; Rebecca Seibel; Joey Hawkins; Kate Bass Root; Tim Denny; Susan Hodges; Karla Bushway; Carol Bushway; John Freitag; Brian Johnson; Jon Stableford; Roz Finn; Stephen Marx; Shannon Varley; Heather Bagley; Tim Briglin; Janet Cavanaugh; Beth Preston.

Meeting convened at 7:05PM

Steve Campbell introduced himself and the Members of the Planning Commission present.

He informed the public of the process for the Plan:

1. PC will continue to work on proposed Plan;
2. PC will hold a warned & posted public hearing; and
3. Selectboard will hold a public hearing before voting on the Plan.

He explained the maps available for perusal:

1. a Conservation and Linking Lands map that identifies key wildlife areas;
2. the map of the proposed new village boundaries; and
3. the map of Rural Residential I and Rural Residential II.

The motivations for the new Plan are:

1. New Vista;
2. preserving wildlife habitat connections; and
3. the continued pattern of growth & development that upholds Strafford's character.

There are no acreage changes and any zoning changes will be voted on by the entire town.

Different sections of the Plan were introduced with discussion following:

Land Use: the biggest change here is the introduction of Rural Residential II which advocates lower density through cluster development (no more than 5 houses per 15 acres) and no new paved roads. There has never been a PUD in Strafford. If need 5 good septic sites and separate water for each will probably have to consider shared systems. There is nothing in the Plan to prevent this. The villages have 1 acre zoning and no cluster development could be done. The current septic systems in the villages, especially the Upper Village, may soon pose problems and a shared system has been suggested in the Plan. The idea is to maintain traditional patterns.

Natural Resources: There is a new flood resilience section and buffers along streams have been suggested.

Energy: by 2050 the state has mandated that VT will be energy efficient. Villages are under pressure to identify where to place, and where not to place, solar arrays and/or wind turbines. The state will give deference to Town Plans that site specific places. But just because we designate sites does not necessarily mean we have to follow through and actually develop arrays or place turbines on them. At this point it is more important to identify sites where we do not want commercial wind developments. Independent home wind generators, if combined with others, would meet Strafford's wind goals. Strafford is part of the PACE district and individuals can apply for aid in energy retrofits. For the nonce, the Planning Commission will work with the Conservation Committee on this.

Discussion followed on:

- \*what specifically aimed at New Vistas ( density/clustering; no new roads; conditional use required in RR II; more prescriptive language);
- \* senior housing and the difficulty in finding a place close to either village to construct; a Cobb Hill type of community was discussed as well as the Hartford idea of allowing identified districts to define their own lot size;
- \*do not want to discourage clustering; good to identify areas for clustering;
- \* use of language to limit growth.

The state has requested a statement of intent to reapply for Village Designation for South Strafford (expired with old Town Plan) and we must have a new Plan in place to do this. We should also apply for this designation for Strafford. This designation is important when applying for grants and other funding sources.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10PM.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Martha M. Walke, Secretary