

STRAFFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes 31 June 2016

Present at the Justin Morrill Education Building at 7:00 p.m., were commission members Steve Willbanks, Chuck Sherman, Mike Hebb, Jared Jenisch, Tii Mclane, J.T. Horn, Kate Root and Amy Metz. Special Guests: John Echeverria (Planning Commission) and various local residents.

- Presentation: New Vista On The Horizon (John Echeverria, Vermont Law School) – John Echeverria presented to various Strafford landowners and the surrounding community regarding the vision of David Hall's NewVista Community. He explained that David truly believes his ideals are for the greater good, creating a sustainable community model that can be applied to anywhere in the world. However his plans clearly do not take into account the land use and ecological ideals of existing VT residents.

Each diamond shaped community would consist of 15-20K residents living on less than a 1/10th of an acre, with residential development located at the core and then surrounded by mixed-use development for commerce, "low-protein" agricultural, industrial development, and one site reserved for drilling. The Community would be run by a Board of Directors and those who wish to join the community would be ask to give their assets to the community, to be held in a trust. Education would be private and within the community.

In summary, many in the audience voiced their concerns and disapproval for this type of project. Mr. Hall is not thinking about the disruption to the current residence, including wildlife. It was also noted that an influx of such a large population with the same core values could potentially disrupt the legislative balance of our region. Many are hopeful that this type of development would not pass Act 250. Regardless, this is a wake up call to make sure Town Land Use Plans are up-to-date and take into account threats of heavy development such as this scenario.

- Approved 4/26/'16 Minutes
- Events: Cross-Strafford Trail Hike (June 4th)
- Trails/bridge: Mike - Nothing new to report
- Wetlands Update: New approach to conducting field visits. A core team has been identified and volunteers will be asked to fill in when needed.
- Speakers' List for '16 - Nothing new to report
- Old Business Updates:
 - Podunk WMA: Timber-cut restoration
 - Invasives
 - Taylor Valley Buckthorn Project – Tii was inform That VT ANR has about 10K in grant funding available for this project but we would need to provide a match. Need a plan to close this gap in order to start the project in October.

- Next Meeting: June 28, '16

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Metz, Recording Secretary