

Bethel Planning Commission
Minutes: Meeting of 02/20/08

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Attending: Davis Dimock (Chair), Peter Dohrn, Carla Hodgdon, Joanne Kent, Cecil Washburn.

1. **Call to Order:** 7:14 PM.
2. **Review / Set Agenda:** No changes to draft agenda distributed 02/14/08.
3. **Minutes Meeting of 01/16/08:** Approved as distributed in draft on 01/17/08.
4. **Correspondence:** (a) Copy, VLCT booklet on *2008 Municipal Policy Priorities* – file; (2) Copy, Thank you letter from TRORC regarding payment of FY08 dues by Bethel Town – file; (3) Copy, DEC letter requesting additional information regarding subdivision/development on Morse Road – file; (4) Each member received a copy of (i) VT Municipal & Regional Planning and Development Act and (ii) Bethel Town Hall Newsletter #5.
5. **Outside Wood Boilers:** Various Commission members had talked with townspeople either familiar with or owning boilers as well as checked out available internet site information. Also, Dimock had a pertinent article from the 02/19/08 New York Times. Discussion included new versus existing boilers, siting distances from boundary lines or setbacks, manufacturer standards, and housing clusters versus ‘open country.’ A leaning toward limiting use in populated areas seems to be emerging, however, no decisions were made. Discussion will continue with additional input solicited from the public and available resources.
6. **Base Zoning Districts:** The three possibilities to pursue at this time identified previously were (a) move ‘multiple family dwelling’ from where conditional to permitted and from where excluded to conditional, (b) combine Village Residential and Village Business, and (c) combine Highway Residential and Highway Commercial.

It was understood that multiple family dwellings were as conditional in some base districts to assure adequate parking. The existing off-street parking ordinance (Section 260) addresses this adequately in all but Village Business District.

Discussion to combine Village Residential and Village Business Districts was unable to resolve merging their conditional uses and the lot area minimum. It was finally agreed that a combination would be unduly cumbersome rather than streamlined and that it would therefore be better to leave them as they are.

Discussion to combine Highway Residential and Highway Commercial Districts resulted in moving Individual Service, Community Service, and Municipal to permitted uses (previously conditional). Other permitted and conditional uses would remain as are. Lot Area Minimums are nearly identical. Rear/Side Setback was not discussed. It was felt that this combination has potential for transmittal as a recommendation to the Select Board later this year under the name of ‘Highway District.’

7. Possibilities for Municipal Planning Grant application: Dimock had talked with a variety of folks. Our Town Plan defines numerous points that need further delineation before planning discussions regarding them could occur: for example wildlife habitat, wetlands, forest types, and wildlife corridors. Pete Fellows at Two Rivers recommended a two step process- inventory, then analyze. Inventory would include map review- analysis would involve ground surveys. Consultants are available: the ones mentioned by name located in Norwich, Post Mills, Marshfield, and Huntington. Questions were raised about the impact or 'factoring in' of development restrictions on land values and landowner tax rates. Commission members were asked to review the Town Plan Goals, Objectives and Planning Principles for other possibilities, to be discussed at the next meeting.

8. Next Meeting / Agenda Items: Wednesday, MARCH 19 2008
7:00 PM at the Bethel Town Office

Agenda Items: a. Outside Wood Boilers.
 b. Base Zoning Districts.
 c. Possibilities for MPG application.

9. Adjourn: 8:40 PM.