

Townshend Planning Commission
May 10, 2006

Commissioners present: Art Monette, Sue LeCours, Dale Thiel, Mike Charles, Tom Lyman, Tiz Garfield

Committees

Building Committee Charles reported that the building committee met and chose the following: Mike Charles chair, Anita Bean vice chair, Walter Meyers clerk. Charles had no minutes from the meeting but will bring them to a future PC meeting. The BC has proposed alternatives to our plans for the town hall, they include adding offices to the back of the building and placing the elevator up front near the existing staircase. Charles will draw the plans and bring them to the PC before going to the SB. The BC has also verified the land around the town hall and feel there should be room for parking on the sides of the building.

They will need to investigate the septic system and are still looking into handicapped parking in the front of the building.

Charles asked how the BC will receive funds for any projects.

The BC will bring general plans to the PC and we will need to put it out to bid depending on the dollar amount.

It was decided that the PC should have a charge for the BC, the following was written:

The planning commission charges the building committee with making recommendations on bringing the town hall up to code and providing office, meeting and storage space based upon needs established by the planning commission study.

Lyman made motion to accept the charge as written, LeCours second, it was unanimously accepted.

Land Committee Monette reported that the LC met with the SB at the Janos site on Monday evening. Janos is back on the market and they met to tour the building to decide if it would be a viable site for the town garage and fire department. Most at the meeting felt the existing building is in poor condition and could not work for either the town garage or the fire department. The cost of removing existing building i.e. hazardous waste, would be prohibitive. The SB asked the LC to continue to meet and investigate area town buildings such as Putney and Guilford.

Minutes of April 26, 2006 were read, Lyman made motion to accept the minutes as presented, Charles was second, the minutes were unanimously accepted as presented.

Lyman made a motion that the minutes do not have to name absent commissioners, Thiel seconded, this was unanimously accepted.

Old Business

We will discuss Ethics and Conflicts of Interest at one of our next meetings.

VTrans – We are in receipt of a formal application for parking in front of town hall, we discussed if we should wait until the BC has made its recommendations before we continue with this project. It was the general consensus that we have been working on this project for a long time and we will fill the application out at one of our next meetings.

Valley Cares Act 250 – Garfield handed out copies of the PC written testimony from the Act 250 public hearing held on May 2, 2006.

Lyman made motion to approve written testimony of said hearing, Charles was second, Thiel abstained, all else voted to approve written testimony, motion carried.

Monette was contacted by a member of Valley Cares and they would like to know where the PC stands on this project, is there support? Monette feels that we should give them an answer, do we support this project? A lengthy discussion followed, Garfield feels that the Kronemeyer site is not the appropriate site for this project; she feels the project would be much better suited on a property such as the Light property that is currently on the market, is across the street from this project and is a private location. Lyman feels that the town may be taking on more than it can handle, adding so many new residents. What will be the burden on town services? A large concern being that if this project fails the town will be left with what? Monette reasoned that his personal contact with senior housing with a family member currently in Hein's Home has been very positive. He voiced his support that the elderly should not have to leave the area where they have lived when we have a project such as this ready to go forward. LeCours voiced optimism for the project stating that there are never any guarantees but Vermont's population is aging, we as a group support senior housing and we should support this project. Charles feels that Valley Cares still has not addressed to his satisfaction our concerns mentioned in the above testimony, although Charles was not able to attend the hearing and did not hear this addressed at that time.

Thiel made a motion that the PC expresses their support to West River Valley Senior Housing Project, second was Monette.

Monette, Thiel and LeCours were in favor.

Lyman was not in favor.

Garfield and Charles abstained, motion failed.

Charles made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Thiel was second, and unanimous acceptance closed the meeting at 9:10 PM

Our next meeting will be on May 24, 2006 at 7:15 PM we will meet with Bob Crego and Bill Jewel at 7:30 to discuss response to Act 250 recess memo.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue LeCours, clerk