

Duxbury Planning Commission

Meeting Minutes

August 3, 2010

Members present: Erica Campbell, Brian Fitzgerald, Rick Scharf, Wayne Walker

Guests Present: Chris Walsh and Clare Rock, Central Vermont RPC

Meeting was called to order at 6:33 pm by Brian Fitzgerald

Minutes: Minutes of the July 6 meeting adopted on motion by Scharf/Campbell. Unanimous.

Town Plan Revision: There was an extended and wide-ranging discussion with Chris Walsh and Clare Rock of the CVRPC.

Wayne asked Chris and Clare if the new Food and Agriculture and Energy sections might cause problems with citizens. Chris indicated that it will depend on what the policy recommendations are. For the Food and Agriculture section, he recommended bringing the agricultural community into public process. Stakeholder involvement will be key, so make an extra effort to get those folks involved. He asked if there is an active agricultural community. Targeted groups could include farmers, restaurants and food stores.

Regarding public process, the PC indicated the plan is for at least two public forums. Chris suggested a couple of participation formats. One is the nominal group process, where the large group breaks into smaller groups, each with a facilitator. Each group brainstorms around a particular question (e.g., what should goals for agriculture be for the year 2020?). Go around the group until people are out of ideas.

Another approach would be a survey, but you have to get a good response rate and a cross-section of the community to get good results. Survey Monkey is a good tool, but it could bias the response.

The PC's schedule calls for having the plan in front of the citizens at town meeting.

Regarding adoption of the plan, it is necessary to follow the process prescribed by state law. There has to be at least one warned hearing by the PC, and adjoining towns and the RPC have to be notified. The selectboard also has to hold a hearing, and may either approve the plan or take it to a town vote.

On energy, Chris worked on that section in the Berlin town plan and will be happy to share it with us. The census may provide data on primary heating source.

Chris commented on Duxbury's land use policies. He noted there are a few unusual provisions: prohibition on large land development and subdivisions limited to five units. He characterized one acre zoning with 70 foot setbacks in the village district as "ridiculous."

Suggested showing people what existing lot sizes are compared to the zoning regulations. This would require mapping work and GIS. Clare noted that it is possible to use Google SketchUp to develop visualizations. Calais increased its density. PC held a forum and used visualization; the RPC helped with GIS and visualizations. Duxbury PC would like to try this.

There was agreement that we should revisit these land use issues. It was noted that sewage issues could be huge when trying to develop village

Wayne noted that Catherine Gjessing had suggested lowering the boundary of the ecological zone and increasing the number of units allowed in the other districts.

Chris pointed out that there is a housing distribution plan in the 2008 regional plan. The plan asks towns to address number of new housing units between 2010 and 2020. For Duxbury it is 157 units. Also should provide a map showing preferred locations for 80 percent or 126 units, and a map showing number and location of new units since last plan. These items are required for the plan to be approved by the RPC. While regional approval isn't mandatory, it is desirable and does provide certain benefits, including priority eligibility for grants.

It was noted the state used to have a scenic roads program to assist towns. Clare will check to see if it still exists. The RPC can assist with the transportation section.

It was noted that it would be great to be able to update the plan with 2010 census information. Erica will find out when it will be available. The Center for Rural Studies has a lot of information current through 2008, including population projections.

Noted that Duxbury does not have digital tax maps, a disadvantage. The RPC will provide GIS services for a fee.

Rick asked about including a section on governance. Chris indicated that a lot of towns have a section that may be included in the facilities and services section, while some have a separate section. They usually include a few paragraphs about each board and commission. The plan may assign each town policy to a specific body or person.

Clare will be the RPC contact as Chris is leaving. Steve Gladczuk can assist with transportation. Steve encouraged the PC to send drafts of the plan to Clare and Steve for review and comment.

PC members thanked Steve and Clare for joining us and providing a lot of valuable information.

Attention then turned to sections of the plan that Wayne has been working on. In the community profile, include a graphic showing housing units from 2000-2010. In land use, mention the master plan for the state farm district and include it in the plan itself. Also, develop better language to define character of each district.

Finally, Rick noted he will engage a class at Harwood to work on agriculture and energy.

Next Meeting: September 9 at 6:30 pm in the town meeting room.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Minutes by Erica Campbell and Brian Fitzgerald