



Town of Whitingham Planning Commission Regular Meeting

Tuesday, November 9, 2021, at 7:00 p.m.

Present

Planning Commission

Keith Thompson
Brad Lackey
Peter Barus

Zoning Administrator

Gig Zboray

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m.

Additions or Changes to Agenda

Hearing of visitors (for concerns not on the agenda)

Review and approve prior meeting Minutes

Mr. Barus moved to approve the minutes for June 8, 2021. Second by Mr. Lackey. All in favor.

Town Plan – review recommendations in the plan and discuss

The PC will discuss further the following policy recommendations:

P. 21:

Policy 11: Recreational resources should be enjoyed by the public in a manner that will not reduce or destroy the value of the site or the area.

Recommendation 11.1: Continue to work with Great River Hydro to provide adequate public access points to Harriman Reservoir along Route 100 and/or Dam Road for the residents of Whitingham. (Selectboard, Planning Commission)

—signage and viewing access for the Glory Hole.

—trail signage and access.

Policy 12: Encourage the preservation of significant scenic resources.

Recommendation 12.1: Designate scenic resource areas. Scenic resources can take any of the following forms: scenic view, scenic landscape, scenic area, or gateway. (Planning Commission).

P. 30:

Policy 1: Adequately maintain Whitingham roads and bridges for safety and good traffic flow.

Recommendation 1.3: Research and consider developing access management guidelines (Selectboard, Road Commissioner, and Planning Commission)

Ms. Zboray will research Rec 1.3 with the Road Commissioner.

P. 31:

Policy 4: Promote and encourage pedestrian and bicycle use and any other alternative modes of travel.

Recommendation 4.2: Work with Great River Hydro and its successors to plan for improved parking access at Harriman Reservoir. (Planning Commission)

Policy 5: Encourage the development of sidewalks, crosswalks, parking and traffic calming solutions in the Jacksonville and Whitingham Villages.

Recommendation 5.1: Work to add sidewalks, crosswalks, parking and traffic calming treatments in the Villages of Whitingham and Jacksonville. (Planning Commission and Selectboard)

P. 45:

Policy 1: Carefully review all development proposals to ensure minimal negative impacts on Whitingham's natural resources.

Recommendation 1.1: Continue to review existing zoning bylaws and make changes as necessary to ensure techniques are in place to minimize negative impacts on the town's natural resources (Planning Commission).

Policy 3: Maintain undisturbed buffers of native vegetation along streambanks and shorelands.

Recommendation 3.1: Review and develop land use and development controls to ensure that development along stream banks and shorelines is controlled to prevent point and non-point pollution, minimize adverse aesthetic impacts, and to protect riparian habitats. (Planning Commission)

P. 46:

Policy 4: Foster the protection and restoration of river corridors, floodplains, wetlands, and upland forested areas that attenuate and moderate flooding and fluvial erosion.

Recommendation 4.1: The town should be familiar with up-to-date ANR river corridor maps that delineate the land areas adjacent to streams and rivers that are required to

accommodate a stable channel. (Selectboard, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Adjustment, and Zoning Administrator)

Policy 5: Protect floodplains, river corridors, land adjacent to streams, wetlands, and upland forests through adoption and administration of flood hazard area regulations governing development in designated Special Flood Hazard Areas and river corridors, in order to reduce the risk of flood damage to infrastructure, improved property, people, and the environment.

Recommendation 5.1: The town should be familiar with Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) that delineate areas that could be covered or inundated by water during flooding. (Selectboard, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Adjustment, and Zoning Administrator)

Policy 6: Avoid new development in identified flood hazard, fluvial erosion, and river corridor protection areas. If new development is to be built in such areas, it should not exacerbate flooding and fluvial erosion.

Recommendation 6.1: The town should regulate any new development in identified flood hazard areas, fluvial erosion hazard areas, and/or river corridors to ensure that development does not exacerbate flooding and fluvial erosion and extend these provisions to development activities that might increase the amount and/or rate of runoff and soil erosion from upland areas. (Selectboard, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Adjustment, and Zoning Administrator)

Policy 7: Encourage the protection and restoration of floodplains and upland forested areas that attenuate and moderate flooding and fluvial erosion.

Recommendation 7.1: The town should update the Flood Hazard Area Regulations to include regulation of river corridors and include provisions for advance notification of and specific limits on new development activities in identified flood hazard areas, fluvial erosion areas, river corridors and/or upland forested areas based on regulatory templates developed by the ANR Department of Environmental Conservation Rivers Program. (Selectboard, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Adjustment, and Zoning Administrator)

Policy 8: Encourage flood emergency preparedness and response planning. 46

Recommendation 8.1: The town should pursue a flood resilience management approach whose essential components are to identify and map flood hazard areas, fluvial erosion hazard areas, and river corridor protection areas based on stream geomorphic assessment studies and maps provided by the Vermont ANR Rivers Program and designate those areas for protection to reduce the risk of flood damage to infrastructure and private property. (Selectboard, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Adjustment, and Zoning Administrator)

P. 47:

Policy 9: Protect ground water resources throughout town.

Recommendation 9.1: Working with the Vermont Geological Survey and the Windham Regional Commission, map locations of aquifers and the land surface area needed to protect groundwater in Whitingham (Planning Commission).

Recommendation 9.2: Once groundwater resources are mapped, develop specific techniques to protect groundwater in Whitingham (Planning Commission).

Policy 10: Protect mineral resources, when identified, and regulate their removal.

Recommendation 10.1: Review and update, where necessary, standards regulating the extraction of mineral resources, impacts on adjacent uses, and the reclamation of the site. (Planning Commission)

Policy 11: Protect Whitingham’s wildlife habitat and discourage the fragmentation of large forest blocks areas.

Recommendation 11.1 The town should consider the feasibility of protecting designated Critical Corridor Areas to maintain a network of connected habitat areas that includes undeveloped lands, conserved lands, and lands under long-term stewardship. (Planning Commission and Selectboard)

P. 52:

Policy 1: Provide for effective land development opportunities while allowing for innovative land solutions in the Zoning Regulation.

Recommendation 1.1: Review the existing Whitingham Zoning Regulation and propose amendments to: (Planning Commission)

1. ▪ refine and implement the Proposed Land Use map;
2. ▪ create development review standards for signs, parking, landscaping, and Critical Corridor Areas;
3. ▪ allow for expanded and well-defined opportunities for home occupations throughout the Town;
4. ▪ increase allowable accessory dwelling size.

Policy 2: Continue to use conservation areas for multiple resource use.

5. **Recommendation 2.1:** Propose zoning amendments that outline appropriate uses and development review standards for these conservation areas. (Planning Commission)

Policy 3: Maintain and encourage agriculture, forestry, and open space and recreational uses in rural lands.

Recommendation 3.1: Investigate uses of regulatory and non-regulatory tools to protect working lands (Planning Commission)

Recommendation 3.2: Explore and utilize various farms and forestland protection strategies. (Planning Commission)

Recommendation 3.3: Explore using clustering of buildings and structures as a design tool to provide an appropriate means for conserving open space and natural resources. (Planning Commission)

Policy 4: Encourage both infill development and appropriate reuse of vacant or underused existing structures in the Villages. Allow new development, alterations or reconstruction only if it enhances the village setting and is compatible with in-village residences and is planned with regard to available services and facilities.

Recommendation 4.1: Review village zoning district boundaries and the capability of lands and facilities within and adjacent to the villages to determine if boundaries could be expanded. (Planning Commission)

Policy 5: Continue to support the traditional role of the Jacksonville and Whitingham Villages as a focus of town economic, cultural and social activities and to provide for mixed residential and commercial/small industrial uses. Of critical importance is the preservation of the historic character of the villages.

Recommendation 5.1: Facilitate landowner access and understanding of State, Federal, and non-governmental incentive programs for structure rehabilitation and historic preservation. (Planning Commission and Zoning Administrator)

Recommendation 5.3: Create a walkable community by working toward safe and convenient pedestrian access to all portions of the villages. (Planning Commission and Selectboard)

Recommendation 5.4: Maintain and renew Village Center designations for Whitingham and Jacksonville. (Planning Commission and Selectboard)

Policy 6: Restrict strip development and minimize its negative impacts.

Recommendation 6.1: Utilize techniques such as shared access points, increased landscaping, sign control, and emphasis on pedestrian movement. (Planning Commission and Selectboard)

P. 58

Policy 1: Plan for a diversity of housing types and coordinate it with the adequate provision for public utilities, facilities, and services.

Recommendation 1.1: Inform homeowners about the change to state law that encourages development of accessory apartments and increase the allowable size of such (Planning Commission)

Recommendation 1.2: Work with the Windham Regional Commission on the housing needs assessment for the region. (Planning Commission)

Recommendation 1.3: Investigate whether any public land or buildings could be used for the development of affordable housing. (Planning Commission)

Policy 2: Promote the creation and preservation of housing that is and will continue to be affordable for all socioeconomic groups within the community.

Recommendation 2.1: Increase the number of affordable housing units while providing information and recommendations on local housing needs. (Planning Commission and Selectboard)

Recommendation 2.4: Support the use of public resources (such as the Vermont Community Development Program and locally-based Housing Rehabilitation Committee) to provide financing to lower income residents to maintain their housing. (Planning Commission and Selectboard)

Policy 4: Support the housing needs of special populations such as the elderly, low income, and residents with disabilities.

Recommendation 4.1: Assess the need for special population housing and establish future planning criteria based on results. (Planning Commission)

P. 63:

Policy 3: Support tourism that draws on the character of Whitingham itself: its beauty, culture, history, wildlife and outdoor recreation.

Recommendation 3.1: Expand and promote the existing trail system.

Policy 4: Assist local businesses by providing economic development information, permit guidance, and community facilities and services improvements when appropriate.

Recommendation 4.1: Review and update zoning regulation and other town ordinances and propose improvements, where applicable, to provide greater economic development opportunities and appropriate development review standards. (Planning Commission)

Recommendation 4.2: Work with the Vermont Downtown Program to help promote our designated Village Centers. Promote and take advantage of resources available through this program (Planning Commission and Economic Development Group).

P. 69:

Policy 1: Maintain land use patterns that will conserve energy.

Recommendation 1.1 Review existing regulations and make changes as necessary to ensure techniques are in place to enhance energy conservation. (Planning Commission).

Recommendation 1.2 Encourage developers to construct new buildings, if possible, in locations that are sheltered from the wind and are oriented to the south. (Planning Commission)

Policy 2: Promote the use of alternative forms of energy that respect the built and natural

environment.

Recommendation 2.2 Evaluate, and as appropriate, propose amendments to the Zoning Regulation to regulate the siting of systems that make use of renewable energy, such as solar panels and wind energy systems. (Planning Commission)

Budget – prepare budget for 2022-23

The Commission reviewed and discussed the budget:

Duplicating and printing the ordinance and town plan;

It was noted that the Town Clerk typically handles FICA and Medicare, legal notices; mileage reducing; postage; seminars for the PC; library. No planning grant.

It was noted that last year the PC budget was \$13,167, expenditures \$11,140.

It was decided to review the budget for final approval on **next agenda**

Annual Report – due December 15th, discuss

The Clerk will compose a draft for approval next meeting.

Executive Session if needed

Other business

Adjourn

Mr. Lackey moved to Adjourn. Second by Mr. Thompson. All in favor.

The meeting was Adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Peter Barus, Recorder, November 13, 2021