

Sutton Planning Commission
November 18, 2014
Sutton Town Offices

Attendees: Sutton Planning Commission (Paul Brouha, Hank Parker, and Joe Witt), Alison Low and Gail Aloisio, NVDA Planners

Paul Brouha opened the meeting at 7:09 PM. He asked if Hank would chair the meeting so he could take notes in place of Secretary Brandon Mazur. Hank agreed and asked for any additions or deletions to the proposed agenda—Lyndon has requested comments on their draft plan—it was agreed Paul is to provide them. Hank then asked if any corrections were needed on the draft of minutes from the Planning Commission meeting on October 27, 2014. After the review Hank noted Joe had participated by phone—a correction was made. Joe Witt made the motion to accept which Hank Parker seconded. The minutes were accepted as corrected.

The meeting then moved to learning the status of the Grange Hall feasibility study grant application. The Vermont Community Foundation sent a letter stating the application had not been funded. Paul was directed to find out why so the application could be strengthened. Joe Witt then offered to bring one of his Vermont Technical College classes to take photos and measurements of the building so a restoration estimate and project budget can be prepared. These documents can then serve as a basis for consideration of alternatives prior to a decision by the Town as what to do with the Grange Hall. Joe's offer was accepted and members asked Paul to approach the Selectboard for a modest budget for Joe's class (the College will pay for the bus). It was again noted that the Grange Hall represents part of the history of agriculture in Sutton and that the Preservation Trust and USDA are potential restoration funding avenues. Hank agreed to look into getting a USDA grant with guidance from Alison Low.

Next, Alison Low began her zoning overview presentation, "Balancing the Pretty and the Practical". The presentation sets the stage for developing strategies to encourage targeted development and to preserve the scenic values of the Town while keeping its rural economy strong. The Town Plan recommends creation of Village and Industrial Districts where development would be encouraged while at the same time preserving working lands. The presentation details strategies to balance agriculture and forestry with residential development.

Gail Aloisio then detailed how working lands in Sutton would be designated using map layers. She presented computer-generated map overlays of selection criteria members had agreed would form the basis for designating working lands in Sutton. Her presentation was simplified but still addressed the question "which lands in Sutton should receive priority for future agriculture and forestry viability?" Members agreed that some reference and process explanation slides could be held in reserve to answer audience questions but were not needed and the presentation could then be shortened. The concern was expressed that Gail's presentation was

not properly embedded in the overview presentation and would make the audience wonder where it was leading. Alison agreed to provide a clearer context and examples of density-based and clustered building concepts as ways to preserve working lands while still permitting residential development in agricultural and forest areas. The placement of buildings and driveways (“building envelope”) are key to preserving access to and operability of such areas.

The meeting then moved onto the status of draft Zoning and Subdivision Applications. Hank Parker stated they have been redone but he has not yet met with Ron Trembley, Sutton Zoning Administrator to get his ideas before offering final drafts for Commission consideration.

The meeting then moved onto new business. Paul Brouha suggested there not be a meeting in December because of holiday and travel schedules. Alison requested the Commission do a “Webex” instead using phone and Internet simultaneously. Members agreed to this offer. Members discussed the problem of getting better member participation at meetings so everyone can get a full understanding of what will be presented in focus groups and later to the townspeople.

Joe Witt moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 pm. His motion was seconded by Hank Parker and approved.

These minutes prepared by Paul Brouha, Acting Secretary

Approved January 26, 2015