

## Sutton Planning Commission

Minutes of Informational Meeting 10/25/16  
6:00 PM, Sutton School Multipurpose Room

Purpose: explain and discuss proposed amendment of the Sutton Zoning and Subdivision bylaw

Attendees: Brandon Mazur, Paul Brouha, Darlene Ahrens, Hank Parker, Chip Devenger, Byron Savoy (Sutton PC); Alison Low (NVDA); Garret Keizer, Richard Nicol, Glen Stine, Sue Parker, Amy Nixon (*Caledonian-Record*), Sharon Nicol, Jim Nicol, Tim Simpson (Sutton SB), Lydia Mello, Mark Hoffmann

Chip Devenger, acting as moderator, introduced the members of the Planning Commission to the members of the public present and set the stage for the meeting.

Byron described the history of the draft's creation and review. He assured the public that the draft reflected the wishes of the people, based on a survey and many open focus group meetings. Sutton has had zoning since 1976, and the draft only incorporates new State law and the desire of the public (stated multiple times in the focus groups and in the most recent Town Plan) to “keep Sutton the way it is.”

Paul then presented an overview of the major changes represented in the draft. The desire of the people, plus the Planning Commission's goal to keep Sutton's productive lands intact, led to the creation of Zoning Districts: the Village, Residential, Scenic, Working Lands, and an Industrial District. Each district has its own freedoms and constraints.

Alison Low (NVDA) then offered a PowerPoint presentation “*Balancing the Pretty and the Practical: Strategies for Implementing Sutton's Town Plan.*” The presentation explained the characteristics, freedoms, and constraints of each Zoning District. Sue Parker questioned if the Industrial District was designed to encompass renewable energy projects. Alison explained that those projects are exempt from zoning under 30 V.S.A. Section 248. Sharon Nicol asked Alison what was considered inappropriate industrial uses on Route 5. Alison offered harming wetlands, development within flood hazard areas, dangerous material storage (citing the requirement of access for first responders), and out-of-scale development as examples. The draft includes performance standards for the Industrial District: noise at property boundary, traffic impact on roads, fugitive dust and smoke, to list just a few examples. Alison then presented several different maps showing different types of lands within Sutton. Tim Simpson expressed that with the State owning 6,700 acres plus several private conservation easements much land in Sutton can't be developed. Alison showed an example of the “typical” rural subdivision of four 10-acre spaghetti lots as “too big to mow and too small to plow” and the proposed alternative of smaller lots, with bonus lots as incentives. Sue Parker asked if new driveways or roads would be private or cared for by the town. Tim explained that the four hypothetical new homeowners would share responsibility for a private 50 foot wide right of way. Sue then asked if the remaining open space would be retained by the subdividing landowner and kept in agriculture or kept in common by the new homeowners. The explanation offered was that either may happen. Jim Nichol asked if an out-of-town purchaser of land would be restricted in their use of it, should they want to put in four 10-acre spaghetti lots. Alison explained that 25 acres from the original lot had to be retained unbroken to qualify for Current Use and the incentive of the smaller lots with the bonus 5<sup>th</sup> lot would represent a more attractive business proposition. All present then reviewed several examples of the draft's new subdivision rules using maps of Lucien Belanger's property with potential subdivision overlays.

The meeting then moved on to a Question and Answer session. Tim asked for and received a clarification of the schedule and process for review and adoption of the draft. Lydia Mello asked about the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and, if large tracts of one's property and one's house are outside of a flood zone but a small sliver is contiguous to a waterway, would a purchaser of that property need to purchase flood insurance or would the seller have a difficult time selling it for it being considered "in a flood zone." It was explained that flood insurance pertains to structures, and owners of structures in floodplains can get insurance at lower-than-market rates if Sutton enrolls in the NFIP, where they previously may have had to go to a more expensive insurance carrier.

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 PM

These minutes prepared by Brandon Mazur, secretary.  
Planning Commission approved November 17, 2016