**NVDA Town Plan Review Committee Hearing Minutes**

**Regional Approval of Waterford Town Plan**

**Wednesday, June 15, 2016 7:00 PM**

**at the Waterford Town Office, 532 Maple St, Waterford, VT**

From Town Plan Review Committee: Sten Lium, Concord; Mike Metcalf, Greensboro; Kenn Stransky, Norton.

NVDA Staff: Irene Nagle

Representing Waterford Town: Waterford Planning Commission members Bill Dimick, Howard Remick, Dave Senio, and John Gillott; Selectboard members Gary Allard, Brent Beck, and Fred Saar; Town Zoning Administrator Chris Brimmer; Town Clerk Joanne Jurentkuff; and members of the public.

Prior to the opening of the hearing, the committee voted to have Mike Metcalf act as Chair. The hearing opened at 7:00 p.m.

Irene Nagle explained the purpose of regional approval of local plans as per 24 V.S.A. §4350. She noted that the Plan contained all the required elements and was consistent with the State planning goals.

The Town Zoning Administrator and members of the Planning Commission explained the process of developing the Waterford Town Plan. Howard Remick noted that the mapping was a major update to the previous plan. Fred Saar explained that the Plan had expired and the Town wanted to make changes to the zoning, so needed an updated Plan. Bill Dimick noted that the Planning Commission will implement the Plan in order of priority.

Sten asked the Planning Commission members about the school population and how the school was regarded. Bill said that the school was strongly supported by the community, was well organized and not overcrowded.

Sten noted that the Plan showed a number of subdivisions in 2010 and asked whether an event prompted this. Bill said it was coincidental, that some large farms were sold and then subdivided.

Kenn noted that the resident survey indicated a concern with chicken farms and asked about the state of farming in Town. Howard answered that there was some concern that former dairy farms would be replaced with commercial chicken farms of the type developed in NH.

In discussing the housing section, Kenn asked about residences with incomplete plumbing facilities. While the census data indicated that these residences were unoccupied, a member of the public noted that there are occupied residences in town without adequate plumbing facilities.

Kenn asked where the Town was in the process of rewriting their zoning bylaws. Bill said the Zoning Administrator, Chris Brimmer, had developed a list of recommended bylaw amendments. Mike asked how bylaws were adopted --- by the Selectboard or by Australian Ballot at Town Meeting.

Sten commended the description in the Plan of scenic views, and noted the pictures were a good addition. Bill noted there were five pending solar projects in town.

Sten liked the way the action steps were laid out in the implementation plan.

Mike Metcalf asked how reducing permitted density in town comports with the provision of affordable housing. Irene explained that density-based zoning, or planned unit developments, allows for “clustering” so housing can be developed on smaller lots and large blocks of open space can be left undeveloped. This can result in more economical development while reducing overall residential density.

Sten noted that development on ridge lines can destroy scenic views. In regard to industrial solar and wind installations, Bill noted that the Planning Commission recommended bonding to cover decommissioning of energy projects.

Mike asked about the description on page 24 of an east/west railroad connection in St. Johnsbury. It was noted that there is a connection to an easterly rail line (not currently used), but the westerly line has been converted to a rail trail.

Sten Lium moved to recommend the Waterford Plan for regional approval; Kenn Stransky seconded and the motion was passed.

The hearing was adjourned at about 7:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Irene Nagle