

Town Plan Review Committee Hearing Minutes

Regional Approval of Newark Town Plan

Monday, March 10, 2025, 6:00 pm

Newark Town Clerk's Office

### **From Town Plan Review Committee**

**Representing NVDA:** Alison Low, Cathlin Lord, Mike Metcalf (Greensboro), Paul Brouha (Sutton)

**Representing Newark:** Luke O'Brien, Mark Whitworth, and Joe Seguin, Mark Ellingwood, Kevin Aucoin, Nancy McDermott.

Prior to the opening of the hearing, the committee voted to have Mike Metcalf act as chair. The hearing opened at 6:04 pm. Mike explains that the purpose of the hearing is to learn additional details about Town Plan and complete a review. In the review, the regional approval committee will recommend approval of the plan by the full board of NVDA if it finds that it: 1) is consistent with the goals established in 24 VSA section 4302; 2) is compatible with its regional plan; 3) is compatible with approved plans of other municipalities in the region; and 4) contains all the elements included in subdivisions 24 VSA 4382. Alison explains the benefits of having a plan include applying for Municipal Planning Grants and once the plan is approved substantial deference can be given for Act 174.

### **Introduction of local representatives and discussion of the planning process:**

Luke O'Brien then explained the Newark planning process. He explained that the town took the full 8 years to complete a major update. The town plan updates largely focused on energy goals and targets, Act 174 and planning for forest blocks, Census data being brought up to date, and the school being redistricted.

Questions and comments for the Newark Planning Commission:

Paul asked a clarifying question about the difference and mention of dBA and dBC and how the noise level was determined in section 6.1.2 Noise. Mark Whitworth explained the difference of dBA being the noise level that is heard by humans versus dBC being the impact and noise level to wildlife. What noise level is acceptable within the town of Newark is largely opinion bases, therefore Paul mentioned that if the town ever wants to enforce any noise filtering the town will need to revise this section.

Mike asked about energy conversion of different materials to BTUs. Alison addressed the question of heating fuel type is determined by Home Heating Fuels from American Community Survey data. This was done to develop a standard for energy plans across the board for all of the towns in NVDA's region. This is to meet the needs of Act 174 energy planning standards.

Mike asked what the impetus was for doing a major update of the plan. Luke mentioned the eight-year deadline and recent legislative changes that need to be addressed, including Act 250 and Section 248. He continued to explain that Newark has had a plan for about 50 years and the town things updated and to preserve the rural aesthetic of Newark. The wind development project proposal in 2012 had an impact on the town and gave an appreciation for being able to lean on the town plan.

Mike asked about the town's outlook on the lack of zoning. Luke discussed a survey of zoning was not well received by the town years ago. Mike mentioned that the plan was very clear on its goals and values.

Paul and Mike noted that the links throughout the plan are very helpful.

#### Questions and Comments from Newark Planning Commission:

Luke brought up his concern with the growing page number of the Town Plan. He wonders if there is a way to distill information in the future.

Paul motioned to approve the town plan and Mike second. Voting for approval from the board on April 24.

This hearing adjourned at 6:28

Respectfully submitted by Cathlin Lord

## Energy Compliance Review Hearing

Hearing opened at 6:28

### Explain Purpose of Hearing:

Alison explained that a review of the plan has been completed and approved by NVDA staff.

Mike asked for someone to explain the purpose of developing the energy plan. The plan was put together to try to meet energy goals. Luke addressed the challenges with trying to meet the energy goals that have been determined, largely due to high and long commute rates and heating in a cold climate. Their hope is that the plan put forward a possible path that is somewhat realistic and responsible through Developing more workshops and resources for residents to learn about and how to be more energy efficient.

### Questions and Comments:

Paul asked about the lack of three phase power transmission in town.

Paul moves recommending the energy plan to the full board, second by Mike.

Mike moved to adjourn the meeting.

Hearing adjourned at 6:36 pm

Respectfully submitted by Cathlin Lord