

SWANTON PLANNING COMMISSION
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08/20/14 PUBLIC HEARING
SWANTON PLANNING COMMISSION

The Swanton Planning Commission held a public meeting on Wednesday, August 20, 2014 at the Swanton Town Offices, 1 Academy Street, at 7:00 p.m.

Present:

Ed Daniel
Andy Larocque
Ross Lavoie
Ronald Kilburn, Zoning Administrator
David Jescavage, Town Administrator
Yaasha Wheeler, Secretary

1. Discussion with Cathy Montagne the Planning Commission's vision for the Southern Growth District.

Cathy Montagne came forward and stated that she and her husband owned 201 acres along Sholan Road/Route 207 and were part of Swanton's Southern Growth District. The Montagnes were working with a company interested in developing on the land. She wished to know what the Planning Commission envisioned for the Southern Growth District: little stores, box stores, restaurants? The issue of municipal water and sewer was to be discussed with St. Albans.

The Planning Commission asked questions to clarify where the area was located.

Mrs. Montagne said that she had come before the Selectboard to request Sholan Road to be upgraded from Class 4 to Class 3; the corner by Bushey Road and Route 207 was a "bad corner" and would need work. Mrs. Montagne pointed out the land that had been gifted to her oldest daughter, and noted potential areas for new roads, as discussed by the Selectboard in the August 20, 2014.

Mrs. Montagne said that the company was looking into putting in an anchor store and putting other stores around it. Mr. Daniel felt that provisions were available in the Southern Growth District for both types of stores: large and small. Mr. Lavoie said that his vision was something similar to Maple Tree Place (mixed use and variety). He preferred separate storefronts as opposed to something like a mall with store fronts on the inside.

Mrs. Montagne mentioned some of the large stores that had been suggested (Krogers, Cracker Barrel, a sporting goods store, etc.), but anything of that type would require more water and sewer. She stated that she was a St. Albans town resident and that she and her family had been involved in local politics for years. She felt it would be foolish for St. Albans not to listen to Swanton, since it would only be in their best interest as a third entity that could support things like future upgrades. It had been suggested that someone could come in the “back 40” and put in a community sewer system, which was provided for in the Southern Growth District regulations. The interested companies were taking pictures and sending them to investors, generating images of potential stores that could go into the area.

Mr. Lavoie asked if she was thinking mixed use, commercial space, or residential? Mrs. Montagne noted that so many gallons per minute were required for fire protection for commercial space. Mr. Jescavage noted that a representative from a company that installed community sewer and water systems in Milton. The Planning Commission discussed the wellhead isolation area from the trailer park; the area would go away if municipal water and sewer was made available for the park.

Mrs. Montagne felt that the trouble with the area is that large business in small areas either hurt the local business or don't thrive because the local businesses have loyalty amongst the community.

Mr. Kilburn felt that it might be important to know what the public wants, rather than simply the Planning Commission. Mrs. Montagne discussed the buying patterns of St. Albans regarding local stores and chain stores. Mr. Daniel felt that buyers were more likely to go south to the Burlington area than come north to the St. Albans area.

Mr. Daniel emphasized that the town preferred to work with people like Mrs. Montagne, rather than saying either “yes” or “no” to a project. Mrs. Montagne detailed some of the improvements her family had done on the land. She had spoken with one neighbor about the possibilities for the area, but had not talked to the other neighbors yet.

Mr. Daniel recommended that Mrs. Montagne, in addition to the Selectboard, should speak with St. Albans about the water and sewer issue. She hoped to have something in place and sold by June 1, 2015.

Mr. Kilburn reminded the board that the Town Plan would need to be revised as well, so it was not a “done deal” yet. The Planning Commission discussed with Mrs. Montagne the possibility of getting a large restaurant in the area, like Texas Roadhouse. She stated that the company had about 10,000 investors that could be interested.

The Planning Commission thanked her for her input, and she thanked the Planning Commission for their time. Mr. Jescavage encouraged her to invite her investors to meet the Planning Commission as well.

2. VT Gas Systems' plan to construct a new transmission line & meter station that will serve a new compressed natural gas facility operated by Energtek North Country, Inc. on the Park D lot. A letter of replay & comments is requested by VT Gas.

Mr. Jescavage passed out the letter from VT Gas and showed the plans for the Energtek project. VT Gas requested a letter from the Planning Commission to present at the public hearing for their ACT 248 permit, to feed the Energtek natural gas project. The Planning Commission had no problems; the natural gas line was already in the area.

Mr. Lavoie made a motion, seconded by Mr. Larocque, to send a letter of endorsement to VT Gas regarding their plan for a meter station to supply Energtek. Motion carried.

Mr. Lavoie made a motion, seconded by Mr. Larocque, to approve the 07/16/14 Planning Commission meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Mr. Lavoie made a motion, seconded by Mr. Larocque, to adjourn at 8:14 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yaasha Wheeler

Ed Daniel

Andy Larocque

Ross Lavoie