

SWANTON PLANNING COMMISSION
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Wednesday, April 29, 2015
PUBLIC MEETING
SWANTON PLANNING COMMISSION

Present:

Ed Daniel
Andy Larocque
Ross Lavoie
Ron Kilburn, Zoning Administrator
Yaasha Wheeler, Secretary
Taylor Newton, Regional Planning Commission

The Swanton Planning Commission held a public meeting at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, April 29, 2015 at the Swanton Town Offices, 1 Academy Street to cover the following matters: To meet with representatives of the Northwest Regional Planning Commission and others to discuss the Municipal Planning Grant which was recently approved to assist the Swanton Planning Commission in accomplishing a revision and update of the "Swanton Town and Village Municipal Plan" which was previously adopted on August 31, 2010. The purpose of a municipal plan is to help guide decision-makers in charting the future of our community with assistance from members of the public in a variety of ways. Members of the public are welcome to attend and to offer input. The meeting on April 29th covered chapter six from the 2010 "Swanton Town and Village Municipal Plan."

There was not a quorum until 7:30 p.m., when Ross Lavoie arrived. The meeting commenced at that time. Mr. Ed Daniel called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. The Planning Commission continued their review of Chapter 6 of the Town Plan.

Mr. Daniel suggested, and Mr. Kilburn agreed, that the plan should acknowledge the Winters' family generosity in helping to expand the Kings' Daughters space at the public library. Mr. Newton said he would try to get Swanton-specific information on the number of MVU students from Swanton. Mr. Lavoie asked him to confirm that there were indeed 44 students from Swanton who went to college.

The Planning Commission discussed with Mr. Newton the number of solar units in Swanton, and Mr. Newton cited the state statute regarding renewable energy options. He

recapped for Mr. Lavoie the difference between the accuracy of the information gathered in the American Community Survey, versus the information from the US Census. Mr. Newton suggested that the Planning Commission may, at some point, wish to consider mentioning suitable sites in Swanton for renewable energy sources, as the Public Service Board may consider the town's preferences when reviewing a project. Mr. Daniel mentioned that there should also be a caveat encouraging people to be good neighbors and not place solar panels in a way as to obstruct a neighbor's view or light. Mr. Newton felt that would be difficult to communicate in a way that was clear or enforceable. Mr. Lavoie added that, currently, neither regional nor local commissions could regulate renewable energy sites effectively, since that was the prerogative of the state. Mr. Newton informed Mr. Lavoie that there would likely be some changes in coming years that would give local governments more weight in this area, though he did not foresee that the DRB would be given the ability to review renewable energy cases. The municipality could, however, clearly state which areas are not allowed for such development, or which areas were preferred for such development, and the Public Service Board would take those preferences under consideration.

Mr. Daniel noted that the interstate and Route 78 heading toward Highgate would, after this summer, be in a good/excellent state. Mr. Larocque added that Route 78 toward Alburgh would be rebuilt in 2016.

Mr. Daniel informed Mr. Newton that LG Printing was no longer in business, and Mr. Kilburn listed VT Precision Tools, Mylan Technologies, and Leader Evaporator as businesses that operated in Swanton. Also, the board noted, the Richford Health Center was moving to Swanton and expanding its services at the old Aubuchon building in the Village.

Mr. Daniel asked Mr. Newton to break out the number of Swanton residents who worked in Chittenden County.

The Planning Commission and Mr. Newton discussed the historic district. Mr. Newton felt that was best addressed in the section on Swanton's future. Mr. Kilburn reminded that the marble was not extracted in the village, but was polished and finished for shipment to New York in the village. He asked Mr. Newton to refer readers back to the plan's forward, when Chapter 6 referenced the need to preserve Swanton's unique history.

Mr. Newton then discussed with the Planning Commission the plans for Chapters 2 and 4. He recommended combining them and suggested that the terms "goals" and "policies" would make the language more consistent. "Goals" would represent the visionary direction of Swanton, while "policies" would be used to achieve the goals. After discussion, the Planning Commission agreed to use this terminology. Mr. Newton recommended adding the word "infrastructural" to the sentence stating that Swanton wished to encourage compatibility with environmental (and infrastructural) capabilities of the community.

He also suggested adding the following sentence: "Public investment shall be planned so as to minimize development pressure on agricultural and forest land." The Planning

Commission agreed to include that language. Mr. Newton explained that he drew much of his guidance for the Town Plan from State Statute, Title 24, Chapter 117, areas 43.02 and 43.82.

Mr. Daniel suggested adding a statement acknowledging that Swanton residents already supported the “current use” and land trust program by bearing the tax burden for those properties. He also asked Mr. Newton to gather more information on the amount of Swanton land that had been conserved.

Mr. Kilburn brought the board’s attention to the benefits of creating a Conservation Committee and participating in the Certified Local Government Program. He explained the areas that such a committee would address, and the funds it would be eligible to receive from the state.

Mr. Newton and the Planning Commission agreed to move the meeting dates to the second and fourth Tuesday of every month, resulting in future Planning Commission meeting dates of May 12th and 26th, June 9th, 23rd, and 30th. (Other dates to be determined.) Mr. Newton added that he needed to do an Enhanced Consultation presentation with the Planning Commission, which would take about 5 or 10 minutes of the next meeting’s time.

The Planning Commission agreed to include an acknowledgement in the Town Plan of Ron Case’s 10-year service to the town of Swanton. Mr. Kilburn added that Mr. Case would be “sorely missed.” The Commission held a moment of silence in honor of Mr. Case. Mr. Daniel suggested extending a copy of the minutes, as well as the Planning Commission’s condolences to Mr. Case’s family.

Mr. Daniel made a motion, seconded by Mr. Larocque, to approve the Planning Commission minutes of April 8, 2015. Motion carried.

Mr. Lavoie made a motion, seconded by Mr. Larocque, to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yaasha Wheeler, PC Secretary

Ed Daniel

Andy Larocque

Ross Lavoie