

**MINUTES**  
**SWANTON PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MARCH 11, 2015**  
**7:00 P.M.**  
**SWANTON TOWN OFFICE**  
**ONE ACADEMY STREET**  
**SWANTON, VT 05488**

The Swanton Planning Commission (PC) held a Public Meeting on Wednesday, March 11, 2015 at 7 p.m. at the Swanton Town Office, following appropriate warning of such agenda on March 3, 2014, on the following matters: 1) 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 on 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. 2) Any other necessary business. The meeting notice also allowed for any changes to this agenda as proposed by members of the PC or members of the public.

Present:

Planning Commission (PC):

Jim Hubbard, Chairman  
Ed Daniel  
Ross Lavoie  
Andrew LaRocque

Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NRPC): Greta Brunswick, Senior Planner  
Taylor Newton, Regional Planner

Others:

Ron Kilburn, Zoning Administrator (ZA)  
Leigh Smith, substitute for Yaasha Wheeler, PC Secretary  
David Jescavage, Town Administrator  
Chad Metayer  
Betsy Fournier  
Molly Lambert

PC Chairman Jim Hubbard called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m., for the above-cited purpose.

Northwest Regional Planning (NRPC's) consultants, senior planner Greta Brunswick and regional planner Taylor Newton were present to chart the anticipated work plan and budget summary under the Town's 2014 Municipal Planning Grant award of \$7800 to update Swanton's Town Plan. Ms. Brunswick is anticipated to be on leave until October 2015, with Taylor Newton now acting as lead consultant for this project.

Mr. Newton explained that the grant award anticipated minor updates to the existing plan, primarily to incorporate flood resiliency language now required under State statute. The Town's zoning bylaws had not previously included a flood resiliency plan. Mr. Newton said that some communities have incorporated flood resiliency language in their town plans through an "all hazard" chapter; others have addressed the matter under specially-devoted chapters.

Swanton PC members registered a desire to address flood resiliency under an "all hazards" chapter, with Mr. Hubbard noting the Town should ultimately adopt its own Hazardous Mitigation Plan. He cited a recent spill at the industrial park's cheese plant, along with the potential for gas line expansion in the Town – developments which may require such a plan.

Mr. Newton said a new Town Plan should also address Swanton's aging population and changing demographics, along with changes to health care facilities.

At a 100-person turnout for the 3/5/15 Swanton community visit by the Vermont Council of Rural Development (VCRD), five task force areas were identified, whose focal findings will be prospectively considered in new language for the Town Plan. NRPC consultants said that as Plan chapters relevant to any of these task forces are created, their draft language can be submitted to the respective groups for comment. The task forces themselves do not yet have language to contribute, as none will form until a meeting on 4/15/15, said Molly Lambert.

Ms. Brunswick cautioned PC members that the Town's plan expires on 8/31/15, and that Municipal Planning Grants are due in September [2015]; keeping to a tight revision schedule and not pursuing extraneous hearings for draft language inclusion should be kept in mind. Mr. Hubbard agreed that the PC wants to keep Swanton's Plan updated to qualify for further grant funding and to remain in compliance with the State.

NRPC assured the PC that the Plan can be amended within the next year if one of the task forces out of the VCRD visit develops language or conveys information of special impact to the Plan.

Swanton resident Chad Metayer felt that the "area along the [Missisquoi] River [near the Swanton Village dam]" should be reconsidered for zoning, to avoid conditional use burdens for commercial developers. A discussion of existing zoning districts ensued. Ms. Brunswick said that the Brownfields Committee is interested in working with Swanton on re-use of the site area. NRPC has resources outside of the Town Plan grant to assist with the issue, she said. Mr. Newton said the Town Plan might touch on changes in vision to future zoning designations. He reiterated the purpose of the meeting tonight as reviewing an introductory work plan and budget summary. PC members regarded a list of proposed meeting dates and tasks provided by Newton.

April 8 & 29 – Chapters 1, 3, and 6; focus: "Swanton Today."

May 13 & 27 – Focus: "Flood Resiliency" & Chapter 2

June 10 & 24 – Chapters 2 & 4, Focus: "Swanton in the Future". These meetings also due to incorporate task forces' anticipated input.

July – Implementation, ensuring compatibility with surrounding towns.

The PC needs to plan these meetings to allow Swanton's Joint Legislative Body (JLB)'s input at relevant points; two JLB meetings are required in the process, Ms. Brunswick said.

Mr. Hubbard felt the dates proposed by NRPC were reasonable for the PC, but he wanted to advise and coordinate matters in advance with the JLB. Mr. Newton said that a JLB hearing should take place by the end of July to ensure keeping comfortably within the timeline. The consultant said that Regional Planning Commissioners are meeting on [9/23/15].

Mr. Newton is anticipated to complete and send the week of 3/16/15, a revised, condensed work plan to Zoning Administrator Ron Kilburn for redistribution, noting proposed hearing dates for the JLB.

Ms. Brunswick confirmed that if necessary, Swanton could readopt its Town Plan with minor changes and make amendments later if more time is necessary, per concerns raised by Ross Lavoie; however, Mr. Hubbard felt the Town should be able to keep within the constraints of the proposed timeline. Brunswick confirmed that NRPC should ideally be present at all JLB and public meetings on the matter.

NRPC anticipates making each revised chapter available to PC members for draft review one week before their respective meetings.

Betsy Fournier advised that she and other Swanton community members following the latest VCRD visit, will be participating in a Vermont Community Development display at the Statehouse cafeteria on Thursday, 4/16/15, from 4-6 p.m. Swanton has been invited to be featured in a healthy communities-focused display. She said she would email a flyer to the Town for redistribution.

Mr. Kilburn advised that a Downtown Development Plan was still available from community volunteers' work on this focus from years ago; it lacked money to be implemented, but includes language instructive to future Municipal Plan writers.

Mr. Hubbard noted that Swanton Planning Commissioner Ron Case has been battling cancer. He invited his fellow commissioners to visit Mr. Case, and noted that PC members would not be relying on Case for Plan revisions currently before their board.

Molly Lambert thanked planning commissioners for supporting the Town's grassroots efforts behind making the recent VCRD community visit a success.

The public hearing portion of the Swanton Planning Commission for this date ended at 7:54 p.m.

Mr. Hubbard led the PC in pursuing other items of business, including:

1. Minutes of 8/20/14 Public Hearing. Mr. Lavoie moved to approve the public hearing minutes for 8/20/14, as written. Mr. LaRocque seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.
2. Minutes of 9/10/14 Public Hearing. Mr. Lavoie moved to approve the public hearing minutes for 9/10/14, as written. Mr. Hubbard seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

3. Vermont Land Trust (VLT) Conservation Request of Earl and Susan Fournier. The PC reviewed the VLT's 12/30/14 notification to the Town's selectboard of the Fourniers' intent to conserve a portion of their property on Campbell Bay Road, a copy of which, along with relevant maps, was supplied by ZA Ron Kilburn. Mr. Hubbard outlined the history of the PC's involvement in reviewing VLT notifications affecting Swanton properties as a matter of protocol. Mr. Daniel moved to approve the VLT request of the Fourniers as presented, seconded by Mr. Hubbard and carried unanimously. Accordingly, Mr. Kilburn is anticipated to draft a letter of response for the PC to sign at their next meeting.

4. Driveway Permit & Road Cut Protocol Matter/Request of Road Foreman H. Garrett. Town Administrator David Jescavage was present to represent a renewed request on behalf of the Town's Road Foreman, Harold Garrett, that all development road cuts on site plan reviews be signed off by Garrett (and other relevant departmental heads) to assure optimum maintenance conditions. A concern over a development at Harvest Lane (across from Cedar Ledge Estates) has arisen, after the fact of the road cut and development's approval, due to the latter's road's allegedly not meeting the Town Road at the prescribed right angle.

Mr. Hubbard and other PC members discussed at length their recollection of previous protocol measures that the Planning Commission had observed before the offspring of the Town's Development Review Board, which now implements site plan approvals. Mr. Jescavage referenced Highgate Planning Commission's policy requiring relevant department heads there to sign off on a checklist before any site plan approvals. Mr. Hubbard stressed Swanton's DRB should also ensure that the Road Commissioner has a chance to remark on any proposed site plans before approval. Mr. Kilburn said that while site plans may offer proof of road cuts meeting A76 road standards, these might not "necessarily meet the needs of the neighborhood." The zoning administrator offered to set up a joint meeting of the PC and DRB to discuss the matter; however, Hubbard said he would be concerned about taking necessary time away from the PC's spring meetings to focus on the Town Plan rewrite. Mr. Hubbard said he would talk with DRB Chairman Joel Clark and with Highway Foreman Harold Garrett about the matter to seek resolution.

Mr. Larocque moved that the PC adjourn its meeting. Mr. Daniel seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously. There being no further business at hand, Mr. Hubbard adjourned the meeting at 8:26 p.m.

Minutes by Leigh Smith  
Typed on March 12, 2015  
Received and filed by:

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Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk

Date

Reviewed and approved on: \_\_\_\_\_, by the following Planning  
(Date)

Commissioners:

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Jim Hubbard

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Ross Lavoie

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Andrew LaRocque

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Ed Daniel