

Town of Peru Planning Commission (PPC)
Minutes for the Meeting of Wednesday, 13 February, 2019 - 7PM

Present:

Hal Wilkins
Stewart Beattie
Lucas Hughes
Peter Roberts
Jon Mowry
L.J. Petra
Ben Freeman
Catherine Byars
Sheila Selden, Recording Secretary

Called to Order by Stewart Beattie at 7pm.

Request to Change Agenda / Public Comments
None

Review and Approve Minutes of January 2019 Planning Commission Meeting
Move to approve by Jon Mowry seconded by LJ Petra
Minutes approved.

Presentation by Catherine Byars / Bennington Regional Planning Commission

Catherine was hoping to have a draft to share but will have for the meeting in March. Discussion on preferred sites. Catherine asked for further information. Hal noted that there were many emails received recently from Peru property owners who want to come in to discuss in May when Paul Meyers should be back. Catherine asked what the energy committee was doing. Discussion followed concerning communication to individuals who have expressed interest. Discussed portion west of Bromley, 100 acre wood area. Discussion on Dorset or Sunderland approach. Hal met with Bromley, Seesaw and Gardiner Orton. Orton is concerned about neighbor's comments. Seesaws is very interested but have little area to work with. Jiminey Peak area (same owner as Bromley) is net 0 property; they would like to do the same at Bromley. Green Mountain Power is threatening a higher rate if Bromley goes with solar or wind power. Bromley doesn't have a problem with PPC designating them as a preferred area. Stewart noted area of land owned by John Cueman near Bromley that is south facing that would be a preferred site. Hal noted that land on lower side of Bromley parking lots is agreeable with Bromley to site as preferred. Discussion over sending out a letter asking for confirmation from Bromley and others that the town would like to designate as preferred sites. Discussion on sending a letter to everyone with Catherine suggesting that the PPC be clear about deadline for return information.

LJ Petra noted that everyone should get a letter so that no one is discriminated against but the wording is tricky. Catherine noted that Dorset sent letters only to those that the town saw as potential site. Sunderland chose all their commercial-industrial as preferred sites and sent letters to them only. Catherine suggested flagging historic district for roof mounted solar, Seesaws and Bromley as possible areas. Discussion on Bromley potential. Catherine will prepare a map highlighting the preferred areas (Bromley Market, Bromley, Seesaws, Historic area in Peru) that the PPC can send to other potential property owners to see if they want to be part of the preferred areas. Catherine noted that she doesn't know of any towns that sent letters to every property owner. Because Peru is so small it might be possible. Discussion on placing a letter in the Town Report to all property owners. Discussion followed. Decision to put the letter in. Discussion on the process once preferred sites are designated and developers show interest, as to what are options for property owners. These may be designated by coverage of area or kilowatts, coverage for protection from neighbors, etc. Policy needs to address changes in technology. Catherine noted that the data she has from Peru has no ownership information so she needs the PPC to provide that data so that she can tell us if Peru's requirement will be filled with Bromley, Seesaw and town acreage as the only preferred sites. Discussion followed on potential for wind power at Bromley. Stewart noted that the top of Bromley is state and national forest. Hal said he would provide Catherine with the data needed next week. Catherine suggested that ownership data should be included in the public data as is done in all other towns. Discussion followed on who owns property under Bromley Condos. Hal noted that Bromley Village is at its max development but might be open to roof-top solar or some sort of solar in areas that cannot be developed for condos. Limitations have to do with water usage. Discussion on Bromley Lodge as a site but seems to be limited but possible. Discussion on Bromley's general agreeability but they don't want to butt heads with Green Mountain Power.

It was decided that the letter should be included in the Town Report. Catherine will prepare the letter based on points of discussion with no map but including frequently asked questions. The Town Report will likely mail within 2 weeks, so Catherine will send the draft letter will go out by Friday. Hal will find out when mailing will occur from Alex Sheets. Usually reports are mailed from town office.

Zoning Administrator's Report

Hal discussed O'Herran Property on Minute Man Lane (Bromley Village) who received a variance to build his house. He now wants to build a garage requiring about 50 sq ft over the front set back line which is the road. The question of a waiver came up as there is no possibility for it within the bylaws. Hal is proposing that the town create a waiver process for small variances like this one. Since no one has reviewed Hal's proposal for modifications to bylaw this should be taken up in the next meeting. Stewart noted there are several definitions that need to be clarified, also. Discussion ensued on what the process would be with public meetings, the selectboard and the ZBA to make these Changes.

Discussion ensued on the fact that the mail is slow and no one has the packet Hal mailed for this meeting. Everyone agreed that emailing documents would be preferable in the future.

Further discussion followed on who needs to be involved in getting the O'Herran variance. There may be changes in the road that will affect whether a variance is required.

This week and next there will be construction on the Rt 11 while they do some drilling.

Short -Term Rentals: Discussion on what determines a short term rental. Hal will provide more information at the next meeting. Discussion followed on the objective. Stewart noted that this means some properties should be commercial. If a home is being run as a commercial property it should be taxed as a commercial property. Resident means that owner lives in the property. Hal is receiving more and more info this issue from the state. Owners of 184 Adams Lane are coming in to discuss problems with short term rentals. The owner is an owner of several other properties so this one will qualify as commercial. Peter Robertson suggested finding out what other towns are doing because this is a problem all over. This discussion will continue in next meeting. Hal will provide more information. Home Away, Vervo, AirB+B, Individual websites will soon need to report to State. Ludlow, Stowe, Killington have the same problem. Discussion followed on local properties that appear to be used as commercial properties.

Other matters: None

Next Meeting Date set for 13 March, 2019

Jon Mowry moved to adjourn; seconded by Ben Freeman.

Meeting adjourned at 8:23PM