

CORNWALL PLANNING COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

May 19, 2010

Cornwall Town Hall

(approved June 16, 2010)

Attendees: Tracy Himmel Isham, Jim Bolton, Annie Wilson, Holly Noordsy
Guests: Jim Duclos, Judy Watts, Matt Gordon, Katherine Brande, Ingrid Punderson, Amy Sheldon, Josh Phillips, Mark Lapin

The minutes of this meeting, once adopted, constitute the final order of the Planning Commission.

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 pm. Quorum established.

MINUTES

It was moved/seconded to approve the minutes of April 21, 2010, as amended with the addition of names of guests: Matt Gordon and Paul Audet. The motion carried on voice vote.

PUBLIC HEARING

Katherine Brande, 1645 Cider Mill Road:

This is a formal hearing for a two (2) lot minor subdivision of an existing single lot. The irregular lot shape is dictated by house site and soil perc tests, and also allows the two lots to use the same driveway. The applicant has provided a more detailed survey to include details about water source, septic system, and building envelope, well location, and waste disposal location. The two (2) lots meet all Cornwall regulation requirements. Tracy moved/Holly seconded that the two (2) lot minor subdivision at 1645 Cider Mill Road be approved as provided with updated information in the survey dated February 24, 2010. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote. The applicant was instructed to have the surveyor add the date when the survey was updated, before submitting the mylar to the Town Clerk to be signed by the CPC.

Holly pointed out that this matter calls to attention the need for the regulations to be more explicit regarding the allowable size of a side of a lot.

PRESENTATION: AMY SHELDON

Beaver Brook Watershed Conservation Plan, a Middlebury Area Land Trust (MALT) initiative for Land Conservation in Cornwall

Amy Sheldon is an independent natural resource planner, who has come to inform the CPC about the Beaver Brook Watershed Conservation Plan. The Beaver Brook Watershed encompasses 40% of the Town of Cornwall. When Mary Dodge and _____ conserved 50 acres of their land in Cornwall with MALT, they asked that the Beaver Brook Watershed be studied and the results be shared with property owners in the watershed, so that people can better understand their land and it's relation to the

watershed. Amy S. has been studying the watershed using several methodologies. She presented the vision, goal, concepts of the Beaver Brook Watershed Conservation Plan, which includes information about habitat continuity, watershed land use, agricultural soils, pre-settlement natural communities, existing natural communities, stream geomorphic assessment and wetlands, waterways and required setbacks, planning for umbrella species (like bobcat), and conservation priorities.

The Plan makes recommendations for:

- voluntary donation of easements on priority lands
- maintenance and enhancement of hedgerows
- re-establishment of stream bank vegetation and
- removal of exotic invasive plants with natives.

The next step is to include core area size and natural community diversity into her analysis and then to prioritize properties based on function and land ownership. Amy S. and MALT are presenting this plan as a complement to Town planning.

OLD BUSINESS

Proposed changes CPC Procedures

Jim Bolton has been in touch with Bruce Hiland, Chair of the Selectboard, about the changes proposed at the April meeting. Bruce H. suggested that the CPC review all the fees at this time. Jim B. and Tracy H. I. will solicit opinions from others, including Adam Lougee of ACRPC. Holly N. suggested the creation of a simpler process (rather than having to get a new survey) to amend the final plat if an applicant has a better idea, when ready to build. At the next meeting in June, the fee structure will be discussed.

Town Plan

The Town Plan will expire at the end of September, 2010. The role of the CPC is to review the Plan and make recommendations to the Selectboard, who then approves or not. The Town has four options regarding the Cornwall Town Plan.

1. Let the Plan expire (with resulting negative consequences should the Town be without a Plan for an extended period of time)
2. Re-adopt without changes
3. Make minor changes and re-adopt
4. Fully update at a cost of \$10,000-\$15,000 (no grants are available from the State this year)

The homework of the Planning Commission is to read the Plan before the next meeting in June, paying particular attention to the goals – have they been met yet.? Jim B. will email the Town Plan checklist and send to all. Claire Tebbs of ACRPC is available to help. If the CPC decides to do a survey, it should be designed to focus on the areas that need updating.

Zoning Documents

Jim Duclos, Zoning Administrator, has set up a system of organizing and storing zoning permits and has created two new documents for the Town – a Certificate of Compliance that property owners can give to institutions like banks, and a Certificate of Occupancy, to be used for new homes and major renovations. In the process of his research on these documents, Jim D. discovered a misnomer in the Zoning Regulations on page 16. In Section 326, “Certificate of Compliance” should be changed to read “Certificate of Occupancy” because the document being described in this section is a certificate of occupancy and not a certificate of compliance.

Sue Johnson has already reviewed these documents. The CPC will review them and bring to the next meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

A person who is planning to purchase real estate is considering establishing a pet kennel and crematorium, has asked if the Town would allow this use. The board agreed that either use would be a conditional use. Conditional use requests are handled by the zoning board of adjustment (ZBA). The seller should be advised to go through the ZBA process before purchasing the land.

The meeting was adjourned at 9: 32pm

Respectfully submitted, Sharon Tierra, CPC Secretary