

TOWN OF STAMFORD
PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED TOWN PLAN
November 16, 2017
(UNAPPROVED)

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, David R. Tatro, Daniel J. Potvin and Carol Fachini.
Michael Denault was not present.

Visitors: Donna Engel, Helen Fields, Susan Flash, Stephen Greene, Peter Grudin, Bill Levine, Pat Sullivan, and Ruth West.
Deborah Darling, Board of Listers.
Lori Shepard, Selectboard Secretary.

Nancy Bushika called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m. and announced that we were here to review the proposed town plan which was previously submitted by the Planning Commission and which will be in effect for the next eight years.

Susan Flash asked about energy development. Dan Potvin who is also on the Planning Commission stated that the Planning Commission is working with the Bennington County Regional Commission for energy development in our area because the state says that way we will have a say in what happens. The state is pushing wind energy and has their eyes on the Hoosac mountain range. The development is in very early stages. Although solar is the least effective, the state would like to see 16 acres of solar panels per town. They have looked at soil maps and are trying to stay away from energy development on farmland.

Bill Levine noted an error on page 53 where it states that the school gym is used by our senior group for senior luncheons. This has not happened in years and is outdated information.

Dan Potvin responded that it was just an example of community gatherings. The veterans dinner was recently held in the school gym. The town plan is a lot of work, a lot of words and ideas, but it doesn't carry a lot of weight. He does not feel the town plan needs to be changed.

Bill Levine noted the last paragraph on page 69 refers to the road between Stamford and Pownal and calls it the "old County Road". It is confusing and should be corrected for clarification.

Nancy Bushika mentioned that on page 49 they use school enrollment figures from 2004 and 2008 and a school budget figure from 2010. These figures are very outdated. The Bennington County Regional Commission received \$7600.00 in grant money to update the town plan and it doesn't look like we got our money's worth. They didn't seem to update very much information.

Nancy Bushika saw on page 42 the sentence, "On The Lane road an existing speed limit sign should be moved to be more visible to motorists." She does not feel this belongs in the town plan. Dave Tatro has state rules and regulations for the type and placement of road signs. It's too bad the Planning Commission didn't consult with the Road Commissioner.

Peter Grudin noted that the town plan mentioned changing the lot size from 2 acres to 1 acre in town. Dan Potvin stated that the state likes to see downtown clusters and housing more spread out beyond the center. Bill Levine stated that the water and septic overshadowing would likely prohibit new building in the center of town. Helen Fields said the state likes to see downtown centers with storefronts and sidewalks and mixed use zoning, and then living spread out outside of town. If the town installed municipal septic and water, the downtown area designation could change.

Helen Fields recalled an email for local food hub creation. She said our capacity is much greater than what we are using. Our hillsides used to be open farmland instead of trees. When energy resources go and our weather patterns change, we will need to be dependent on local resources. The state is pushing to lighten the burden on local regulations concerning food handling to promote local food sources. Helen Fields would like to organize a group to make our town more independent and supply our own food for our own people. Helen Fields believes we need to strengthen ourselves as a community. She would like to get people together to implement the ideas we have in the town plan. The town plan is a vision for the town going forward and she would like to organize a group to put the ideas into practice.

Dan Potvin said we should start with making changes to the zoning by-laws that facilitate and encourage farming.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to adopt the town plan as is, as a guide for the future growth of the town. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

Helen Fields felt that the whole point of this meeting was to take comments on the town plan and make changes to the town plan.

Dan Potvin would like to see reduced regulations on farming and agriculture. He thinks but is not sure that the town setbacks do not apply and are waived when building agricultural structures.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to close the hearing. SECONDED by Dave Tatro. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting ended at 6:20 p.m.

Daniel J. Potvin
Clerk

DJP/las