

Pomfret Planning Commission

Meeting April 17 , 2023 7 pm.
Pomfret, VT.

Approved 5/15/23

Present: Bill Emmons, Nelson Lamson, John Moore, Doug Tuthill, Tyler Wellington, Karen Hewitt Osnoe (Zoning Administrator).

Absent: Cy Benoit

Guests: Nancy Mathews, Chip Carver, Chris Freeman, Emily Grube

Call To Order/Agenda Changes/Public Comment:

Bill Emmons called the Planning Commission meeting at 7:15 pm.

Public Comment. None

John Moore reviewed the minutes of 4/03/2023. Nelson motion to approve and Tyler 2nd. Motion carried.

Karen informed us of hearing scheduled on May 2nd Dana Rd Waiver on set back; May 11th ZBA to hear the appeal by Broad Brook property. Karen confirmed that the State enforcement has been involved has not resolved the matter nor will return calls to Karen. There is a hearing to be scheduled for an addition that does not have the 65 feet front yard setback on a property on Hewitt Hill Road.

Bill Emmons mentioned that if we put in the Appalachian Trail and the conserved land he is pretty sure it is not going to fly as being approved by TRORC. It is just not going to work.

Emily Grube mentioned with the steep slopes not a problem for Pomfret. What may work for Chittenden County does not make any sense for Pomfret. When you take our large block of land that has been undeveloped you are penalizing me for keeping it open. If current use goes way the land will be unaffordable. You are taking away development potential for my children and grandchildren.

Emily mentioned the discrimination when she was on the PC when they were trying to do differential zoning as to lot size. That is also true with the forest

blocks. There is enough habitat area in Pomfret. You better do all of Pomfret or nothing at all. The wild animals are becoming more accustomed to people and if a bear can be taking a nap 15 feet away from me when I am working in my blueberry patch we do not have a problem...I don't think we should have a forest block or habitat connectors in Pomfret.

Doug Tuthill gave an overview of the Current Use for farmers and now what it is... The burden and high taxes are now on those not in current use that help fund the current use. The lack of affordable housing for workers is a concern.

John Moore mentioned he was not in favor to front run something until all landowners are involved. At this time he did not want any reference in our draft town plan to maps or references specifically for forest blocks or habitat connectors. Mentioned Jens Hawkins Hike what a great job Pomfret has done and nothing is broke. John also mentioned the 3 to 4 years the PC did try again the differential zoning and came to the same conclusion as Emily.

Nancy Mathews mentioned things may not be black and white and some examples from various towns may work for Pomfret. Maybe possible postponing the timeline.

Nelson Lamson commented on the lack of concerns of the rights of property owners in all of the ACT 171 material he has read.

Chris Freeman mentioned that in Vt. one size does not fit all. There is the option of having local control with friends and neighbors and not surrendering autonomy. Chris was supportive of Emily's comments.

There was considerable discussion on whether to include: Just the Appalachian Trail or the Appalachian Trail and the conserved land or nothing at all.

It concluded with a motion and amendment by John Moore 2nd by Doug Tuthill that at this point the draft of the Town Plan update and thru the TRORC contract, May 31, there will be no reference to forest blocks and habitat connectors because this is solving a problem that does not exist and the topography of the land here prevents development which by its nature serves the wild life corridors that are being sought. Motion carried unanimously.

Chip Carver mentioned that with the small amount of land in Pomfret developed why are even here on this discussion.

There was discussion on whether to have the May 1st meeting to be on the town plan or identify community priorities and concerns and brainstorm potential policies and recommendations for addressing those as recommended in our grant proposal. . Motion made by John Moore and 2nd by Doug Tuthill to have the forum be on the draft town plan. Motion carried unanimously. It was mentioned hopefully before May 1st meeting the 2020 census could be updated into the plan and other corrections.

There was discussion on the pending survey. John Moore will check with Becky as to how many people on the Grand List have email addresses. The survey and future forum will address more broad issues.

John brought up the need to put light industrial with conditions in the Town Plan what is in line with the Town zoning. Sound regulations are also on the map.

It was suggested that the “table event” that Connor plans on doing the Town Hall Meeting at the school may be a better option than the Abbott Library. Emily will talk with the selectboard on Wed to see if that is ok.

Billy mentioned the need for Vice Chair... Billy to talk with Cy. Billy mentioned that possibly Jack Pearson might be a good candidate for the 7th slot on the Planning Commission.

John thanked the Public for their contributions.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm

Respectfully submitted:

John Moore, Clerk