

*(Draft only – not approved by the Selectboard)*

# **Greensboro Selectboard**

October 23, 2018 Special Meeting

## **Minutes**

**SELECTBOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Andy Kehler, Peter Romans, Susan Wood

**SELECTBOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Michael Lapierre, Matt McAllister

**OTHERS PRESENT:** David Miltenberger, Ellen Celnick, Josh Karp, Dan Predpall, MacNeil

**CALLED TO ORDER: 11:02 AM**

### **AGENDA: The Selectboard will submit comments on the draft Town Plan to the Greensboro Planning Commission**

The Board, and others present, discussed the draft Town Plan with members of the Greensboro Planning Commission (GPC). Items discussed included:

**POSSIBLE BYLAW CHANGES** Elements of the Plan that may lead to proposed Bylaw changes are scattered throughout the document. GPC Chair Dan Predpall agreed that the draft Plan should consistently state when new language is likely to result in a proposed Bylaw change.

MacNeil, who serves on the Development Review Board (DRB), noted that the phrase ‘support and encourage’ is included throughout the Plan, and asked what will actually come of such vague language. Sue said that in many cases town committees, with guidance from the Plan and the Selectboard, will be tasked with taking concrete actions to implement items in the Plan.

GPC member Ellen Celnick said that the town could do a better job publicizing town committees, i.e. which committees exist, what’s being working on, and the fact that town committees are almost always open to new members. It was agreed that town committee activity is very dependent on the energy of its members, and that committee activity can ebb and flow dramatically.

**TOURISM** Andy expressed concern about Plan elements promoting tourism. Andy said that he grew up in Woodstock and observed that an intense focus on tourism hurt the community. He was skeptical about the idea, contained in the Plan, whereby a part-time director of recreation would be hired by the town to promote tourism. Town assets should be leveraged more for residents than for tourists, Andy said, and added that Greensboro’s summer residents should be considered members of the community, not tourists.

GPC member David Miltenberger replied that while the GPC is not the ‘Chamber of Commerce’, they tried hard in this Plan to balance protection of the natural environment with economic development. The GPC thought that increasing tourism was a prime way to increase economic development in town and protect the environment at the same time. Dan suggested that maps of existing hiking and biking trails could be produced, along with a listing of area recreational facilities. Hiring someone to coordinate this project would simply facilitate it happening, Dan said.

He added that while the town should consider increasing tourism, it was not the GPC’s intention to attract masses of tourists, and that the lack of local accommodation will ultimately limit the growth of tourism.

MacNeil questioned the perceived need for a Recreation Director position, as well as the focus on tourism. Instead, he suggested, the Plan could encourage the town recreation committee to study and work on this issue, and the committee could be given more funding to help with new projects.

### **DEVELOPMENT, AFFORDABLE HOUSING, KEEPING RURAL CHARACTER**

Dan said that GPC surveys show that keeping rural character is very important to a majority of residents.

Andy noted that the Plan's approach to keeping rural character seems to be encouraging development in and around the Village Districts – yet there's not much room for development there. Is discouraging development outside the villages the right approach?

MacNeil felt that focusing on affordable housing in the Bend will exacerbate existing income disparities. He added that from the DRB's perspective, decreasing road setbacks in the Bend from 50' to 25' would be sensible.

Peter Romans said that in the Rural Lands District, 10 acre zoning is counterproductive and does little to further many of the Plan's goals.

Josh Karp said that when he was chair of the GPC in the recent past, he and other members failed to do anything meaningful to promote affordable housing in the Town Plan or Zoning Bylaw. He agreed with Peter that 10 acre zoning is a somewhat arbitrary lot size and has not necessarily been good for the town, in terms of preserving open space or encouraging affordable housing.

Josh recently heard about 'lot size averaging' and suggested the GPC look into this concept for the Rural Lands District. This would keep building density low while allowing for some smaller lots. Zoning regulations that allow for smaller, more affordable lots could help increase workforce housing for area businesses, and attract young families to town. More young families mean an increase in school enrollment, possibly making our small school more viable. Josh compared the recent growth of Craftsbury's school-age population with that of Greensboro, and wondered how much of that has to do with Greensboro's 10 acre minimum lot size in the Rural Lands District. David commented that lot sizes are just one factor, and that many families move to Craftsbury for the school system.

### **OTHER TOPICS**

Andy said that from an economic development perspective, there's a need for three-phase power outside the villages, and felt that the Plan should encourage Hardwick Electric Dept. to make this infrastructure investment.

Discussion of the dam at the public beach, which regulates the level of Caspian Lake and is owned by the Hardwick Electric Dept. There are concerns about the future of the dam and possible huge upkeep/repair expenses if it were to revert to town ownership – a likely scenario, according to some.

Sue noted that the Plan contains a number of links to external websites, which often change and are prone to disappearing. She suggested uploading such files to the town website in order to create permanent links. Permission from authors might be necessary in some cases, but most of the links are likely public documents.

Sue asked Dan if the P.C. had received adequate feedback on the draft Town Plan from the Selectboard. Dan replied that adequate feedback had been received. He hoped the Selectboard will be able to review the final draft of the Town Plan at its December meeting.

The Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

**ADJOURNED: 12:16 PM**

*Respectfully Submitted: Josh Karp, Selectboard Clerk*