

Tinmouth Planning Commission
December 21, 2023
Regular Meeting
Minutes

Members present in-person: Michael Fallar, Vito Macaluso, Larry Carabeau, Judy Gilmore, Andy Gilmore, and Rainbow Squier

Members present via Zoom: Bob Lloyd, Kim Harbaugh and Pat Psholka

Others: present in-person: Travis Lepley, Cameron Lepley, and Matthew Silverman (Valentine Farm LLC); Jeremy Gildrien – RRPC; and Gail Fallar Secretary; and via Zoom: Sherry Johnson

Michael called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm, and welcomed everyone.

Members reviewed the agenda, no changes.

Minutes of 10/12/23 - Rainbow moved, Larry 2nded, all voted in favor to approve as written. There was no meeting in November.

Travis presented a draft survey of the proposed 7 lot subdivision of the former Valentine farm on Route 140. This is a second preliminary meeting. Michael noted that this will be reviewed as a major subdivision as there are more than 4 lots. He advised the survey needs to contain proposed driveways, house location, zoning districts, fragile areas, proposed exterior lighting etc – reading from the checklist for subdividers. Travis noted that most lots did not have a plan for a house at this time, that there is a 44KV line owned by OMYA that delivers electricity from Proctor to the quarry in Danby, and that the mountain is very steep. Michael advised that some of the requirements could be waived by the PC if they deemed them unapplicable to this project. After more discussion, Andy moved and Vito 2nded to allow the project to proceed to a formal hearing. All voted in favor. Travis, Cameron and Matthew left at this point. They hope to be ready for the hearing to be held at the next PC meeting in January.

Jeremy, planner from Rutland Regional Planning Commission, was present to begin the discussion about updating the Enhanced Energy Plan section of the current Town Plan. He gave a general overview – some standards set by the State have changed – only solar and wind need to be addressed for instance – not all forms of renewables. And the plan now has to address the equity impact of the enhanced energy section – evaluate how the plan impacts various people in town. There was a discussion about how equity is defined and by whom.

Jeremy recommended that the PC define preferred sites for the location of renewable energy projects, rather than list where they would not be allowed. He acknowledged that the ‘data’ provided by the state regarding current usage for electricity, transportation, etc. was not exact – but to be used as estimates to understand the bigger picture.

Members discussed whether it would be advantageous to have an EEP – most important is to obtain substantial deference when an application goes before the Public Utilities Commission (PUC). The PUC still has final say, and depending on how the EEP is written, the town may or may not have substantial deference.

Jeremy noted that a strong EEP would get most control – include where renewables would be allowed, meet energy goals with other types of energy – geothermal for example. A mix of energy is needed, just not solar or wind, and should include energy efficiency as well. He advised that the state is not demanding towns have an EEP, but wants to encourage plans that plan for the future and benefit people who live in town. It is the Town’s decision whether it is a stand alone plan or part of the Town Plan.

Bob noted that the Regional Plan is being updated, and inquired if the new plan would continue the ‘no industrial wind’ statement that is in Rutland County’s current plan. Jeremy advised that it would.

There was discussion about to reach everyone in town, from those who regularly participate in town activities to those who do not – why not, how to get their input. Jeremy shared a draft of the EEP that the Town of Brandon is working on.

Members discussed whether to apply for a MERP mini-grant to contract with RRPC to help Tinmouth write its EEP. Kim moved and Rainbow 2nd to apply for the grant. Discussion ensued about what exactly the grant would cover, for instance would Jeremy read Tinmouth’s current EEP chapter in the Town Plan, and the earlier energy section in the 2017 Town Plan and advise what is needed to meet the new standards? The answer was no, it would be used for flyers, a community meeting, data collection, and provide technical assistance. Current maps may be okay – may not need all of them. After more discussion, Andy moved and Judy 2nd to table Kim’s motion until the January 18th meeting. All voted in favor. Members decided to read Brandon’s plan for the January PC meeting. Gail will print copies for all. Members are to ponder goals for the energy section/EEP.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Next meeting is January 18, 2024 – possible subdivision hearing.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Fallar, Secretary