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Rockingham Conservation Commission
SPECIAL MEETING--MONDAY, September 28th, 2015
7:00 pm
Minutes

This meeting was called to respond to a request from the Rockingham Planning Commission for the RCC and other volunteers to write a first draft of a “Natural Resources” section of the next Rockingham Town Plan, which needs to be finalized by March 2016. There was not enough time in our regular meeting to decide on the outline of this chapter and agree on writing assignments, so we designated a subcommittee to work on it, and scheduled this meeting of the subcommittee. The subcommittee is led by Peter Bergstrom, assisted by Mike Ghia, Fred Bennett, and Paul Wilson. Amy Howlett asked to be added to the group—we plan to do this at the next RCC meeting.

1. Introductions and public comment

Present: Subcommittee members Peter Bergstrom, Mike Ghia, Fred Bennett; Absent, Paul Wilson; Guests present, Amy Howlett; Lisa Connell, freelance reporter for the Reformer; and Chuck Wise, the new Rockingham Planning & Zoning Commissioner. Chuck introduced himself and explained how he’ll work with the RCC; he will attend many of our regular meetings. Mike explained how the RCC was formed and how it worked with past town staff. Chuck suggested the RCC could sponsor a photography contest for photos of Rockingham natural resources, which could be featured in the new Town Plan, and framed for the 3rd floor meeting room. Mike said Jim Mullen had suggested a “big tree” contest in Rockingham, which is another contest we could sponsor.

Chuck said he’s like to have a draft of the Natural Resources section by December or January, since it needs to be adopted by March. There may be up to 4 public meetings on the new plan, 2 by the Planning Commission and 2 by the Selectboard. He said we’ll need to document why we made changes to the last Town Plan.

Meeting was called to order at 7:15 PM.

2. Discuss and agree on a draft outline of the chapter to be written

We reviewed the draft outline and made a few changes. Renee Vondle may have some data on wildlife crossings in Rockingham; Fred will ask her for them. We agreed to ask Chuck for clarification on the meanings of Goals, Policies, and Action Steps, and whether those can be changed; Woodstock uses

Objectives rather than Policies. We also will ask when to use “shall” vs. “should” and other verbs. We’ll also ask if the maps can be in the chapter vs. in an appendix, and if there are existing maps or data on wildlife crossings or road kill by species. We agreed to ask Chuck if we should address Wireless Communication Facilities, Wind Energy, and Night sky – Lighting; Mike thought we could address the last one in a zoning context.

We agreed to address impacts of roadside trash as it affects wildlife rather than in its own section.

3. Discuss and agree on who will write a draft of each section, and when drafts are due.

Paul had previously agreed to cover birds, herps, and wetlands, and can cover other wildlife as necessary.

Peter will ask Tim Morton to cover Forests.

Fred agreed to cover the other land resources that Paul is not covering (not birds or herps).

Mike agreed to cover soils & topography.

Peter will ask Chuck Ratte (retired state geologist, now in Saxtons River) if he can look over the geology section and possibly revise it.

Amy will cover scenic resources except Mike will cover Night sky – Lighting, and we would prefer to drop Wireless Communication Facilities (no zoning input) and Wind Energy (no projects proposed).

Peter will cover water resources (except Paul on wetlands & vernal pools), and Paul wants to review this whole section. We agreed that including a list of all the named waterways in Rockingham was a good idea (with the 32 names in the naming project plus waterways that already have official names, and including the new map that shows all of these).

4. Discuss and agree on what maps and other supporting materials we want to add, and who might make them.

Did not have time for this.

5. Discuss who will draft any action lists in the plan, and who will review and approve them.

Did not have time for this.

6. Adjourned at 8:27 PM.