

Vershire Planning Commission meeting 1/13/21 approved

In attendance(via Zoom): Bill Baylis-Chair, Gene Sobeck, Ken Bushey, Bob Perkins, Eleanor Zue. Debra Kingsbury-Sec'y., Sande French-Stockwell-Dev. Admin. Guests; Nicole White-Fogarty and Mark Fogarty

Meeting called to order at 7:04pm. Minutes for 11/18/20 were reviewed and approved.

Old Business: Information flyers. French-Stockwell, as development Administrator, felt the flyers would be a great "tool" to help residents understand town regulations, permitting process, and important contact sources all on one sheet, and could be handed out at recycling and to new residents as well. She made a motion to proceed to recommend to the Selectboard that information flyers be finalized for distribution. Sobeck seconded and all were in approval.

Garage update: Bushey stated that he along with McKee, Lyford and Kingsbury, met at 815 VCR earlier today with the architect that had assisted the Town of Glover with their municipal garage project. The architect reviewed the proposed site plans and a set of building plans with the group and stated that he would work up a proposal for his firm's services and explain how they would interact with the commercial contractors to acquire costs and during the building process for the Board's review. The conversation about a potential time frame to break ground was reviewed. Also, taking advantage of the S/E exposure by adding more windows on the front, the type of heat, and the need concrete apron at the front and other water directive needs. Bushey went on to share that he had attended the recent meeting with ANR, the engineers, and the Board (via Zoom) on January 4th to review the site plan and make suggested modifications, and that things were moving forward in a productive and positive manner.

EAB update: Zue was introduced to White-Fogarty, who had recently attended a Selectboard meeting where the topic was discussed, and shared that there will be two articles on the Town Warning: one to ask the voters to establish a fund to manage the EAB problem. The second article is to start the fund with 5K. Zue stated that she, Bushey, and Waltermire had met with Joanne Garton from the VT State Forest, Parks and Recreation Dept. to discuss the importance of designating Tree Wardens and how that would be instrumental in managing the EAB tree situation. White-Fogarty shared that Mark Fogarty, who is on the Vershire HW Crew, is a licensed Forester and holds a pesticide license to manage invasive species. The conversation led to questions about a Tree Warden job description and compensation. Baylis suggested that Zue contact Kevin Geiger at TRORC for a formatted job description and ask whose jurisdiction the role was under... the Selectboard or the State.(as Health Officers are State) Mark Fogarty came onto the screen to share that he would be interested in the role and that he would recommend that the town eventually purchase a chipper with a 14 inch diameter capacity to handle the dead/dying trees when they need removal. It was also stated that there was a vendor in Ely that would take ash logs but they need to be live wood, not after they become contaminated/dead. It was added that some craftsman like the wormhole wood and Mark agreed that having options would be good and planning ahead was essential. Zue asked if the town's present chipper would suffice for now.

Mark stated that it was ok for now but should the EAB expand a more reliable and larger chipper would be warranted. Bushey and Zue stated that 80% of the towns roads had been documented and mapped out with actual numbers/count of ash trees in the ROW.

Lot line adjustment regulation and a required recordable mylar/survey when property is subdivided needs to be worded properly to be an amendment in the present Development ordinance. Kingsbury and Craft are supposed to tackle this.

Cell Tower changes: French-Stockwell stated that she was waiting for Town Counsel to advise on how to address the recent request for a permit to make changes at the current tower on the Ulman parcel off Rt 113 in the village. It was noted that our Dev. Ordinance states that no tower can exceed a height 20 feet above the tree line. It was stated that the town declined the tower permit but that the VT Public Service Board approved it. Sobeck and Perkins stated that there was a real need for cell service and internet and that the commission should entertain options to move improvements forward. (Perkins shared that he was recently stuck on a VAST trail in Taylor Valley with no cell access and had to walk quite a distance to get home!) White-Fogarty suggested that perhaps a notice to high elevation landowners of potential opportunities to encourage tower connectors on their property might be put in the town newsletter. French-Stockwell will update the PC when she learns more about what T-Mobile wishes to do here in Vershire.

Occupancy Permit request: French-Stockwell informed the commission that she had a recent request for an occupancy permit on a newly constructed home as the owners' bank was requiring one. Vershire's permitting process has never lent itself to a finalized structure inspection with an issued occupancy permit. Discussion followed as to having the property owner reach out/hire the State Fire Marshall to inspect the property and issue one or to contact both his homeowner Insurance provider and his mortgage holder as to who they would recommend do the final inspection for an occupancy permit. It was noted that an occupancy permit is issued in other larger communities to verify electrical, heating, wood-stove, smoke-detector, and all other safety features and up to the owner to verify installation and safety to his lender by a qualified professional for those aspects.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.