

Minutes of October 19, 2016 Special Selectboard Meeting; Unified Bylaw Informational Meeting.

Present: Board Members Carl Russell, Lisa Hill, Chris Jarvis, Vanessa Brown, and Moe Brigham. Others present: Town Manager Keith Arlund, Assistant Town Manager Abbie Sherman, Penny Griffin, David Stanley, Sonya Stanley, Lang Durfee, Mike Manning, Rick Benson, Neal Fox, Matthew Durfee, Derek Aldrighetti, David Sambor, Bill Hall, Mary Floyd, Jennifer Schomp, Mike Bilodeau, Mel Washburn, Janice Punger, Leslie Silberberg, Tom Warhol, Geneva Gaiko, Joann Wood, Lucien Hinkle, Tim Aldrighetti, Kim Aldrighetti, Carla Hodgdon, Mel Washburn, Andrew Delaney, Fred Dieffenbach, Joseph Russo, Justin McCoart, Paul Feeney, G. Quilici, Cynthia Quilici, Cecil Washburn and Lisa Campbell for the “Herald of Randolph.”

Chairperson Russell called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Russell advised the flume table demonstration could not be provided for that evening.

I. Introduction

A. Discussion of Planning Process and Responsibility of Selectboard

- Russell welcomed everyone and looked forward to their participation.
- The focus of this meeting will be the river corridor designation contained in the Unified Bylaw.
- He stated that there is a public risk and public responsibility to guide development within these areas.
- The Unified Bylaw is the response of the Bethel Planning Commission to the new Bethel Town Plan approved two years ago.
- He stated that it is possible to amend or alter the new by law and that it is possible for citizens to petition for a ballot vote on them.
- He emphasized that this not a formal hearing for the Selectboard and is meant to better inform citizens of the rationale behind the river corridors and other aspects of the zoning changes.

B. Response to Concerns

- Russell stated that the Board had heard the concern of citizens about the river corridor issue and this meeting is intended to inform and educate everyone on the science and theories of river corridors and the potential impact that development in these areas.
- He stated that he had met with the Two Rivers Regional Commission and members of the Planning and Conservation Commissions to begin work on realistic alterations to river corridor mapping based on existing geographic and man-made features like bridges, highways, railroad tracks and other hardened features like those that exist in the Bethel Village core.

II. Vermont Agency of Natural Resources: John Broker-Campbell and Gretchen Alexander

A. River Corridors and River Corridor Planning

- Emergency Relief & Assistance Fund (ERAF) – State share of reimbursement in the event of a disaster. Bethel currently meets the requirements to receive 12.5% share. With the adoption of the river corridor regulation, the Town would receive 17.5% share from the State in the event of a disaster.
- Conservation Easement Program – Land trust easement that property owners can participate in also prohibits new structures, has a 50 foot buffer, but does not have active channel management.
- Joann Wood requested a count of the number of houses or structures in the river corridor. Pete Fellows will provide this to the Selectboard, but noted there are currently 37 in the special flood hazard overlay district.
- The current river corridor map is based on science of the rivers and where the channels could go. It was created using Statewide GIS data and included the watershed area, natural topography and on-the-ground physical constraints of where the corridor wouldn't be allowed to go or would be moved back. The

Town has the option to request alterations in some areas by submitting the request to the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR).

III. Discussion of Potential Changes to River Corridor

A. Pete Fellows (Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission) with Map Alterations

- NFIP maps produced by FEMA and last updated in 2007 were not based on 2007 data.
- There are currently 27 flood insurance policies in force in Bethel and rates are rising.
- Properties located in the river corridor do not currently need flood insurance.
- Total damage from tropical storm Irene was \$7.4 million.
- There are 5 properties where the river corridor would prevent development. Other properties have the river corridor within there is no increase in restrictions due to other preexisting zoning requirements.
- The process to make river corridor adjustments with the ANR is new. A few areas were shown as examples where the river corridor could be remapped because other infrastructure wouldn't allow the river to change course, or if it did the river would be put back in place.
- ANR realizes that within a developed village, changes need to be made to the river corridor maps.
- TRORC is working with the Planning Commission and Selectboard to modify the maps.
- Property owners have the option of contact ANR to request changes to the maps where it involves their property if they felt there are reasons why the river corridor is inaccurate for that area.

IV. Open Meeting for Question & Answers

- Carl Russell advised that property owners do not have unlimited rights to develop and most that transect the river corridor already have full development on them. The Town does not have to adopt stringent river corridor regulations, and could keep the corridor on the maps as informational for management areas.
- Bylaws that allow conditional use development in the river corridor may not meet the requirements for ERAF.
- The river corridor as mapped is not the same as what the river dynamics will allow to happen, for example wash away roads.
- Mike Manning noted there are other ways in which the new bylaws affect property owners, for example needing to have a survey map for a minor subdivision.
- Tim Aldrighetti asked if other towns could be looked at for how they are utilizing the river corridor requirements.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:11 p.m. by motion of Lisa Hill, seconded by Moe Brigham.

Carl Russell

Lisa Hill

Vanessa Brown

Chris Jarvis

Moe Brigham