

4.4.23 Minutes

Attendance: Geo, Patrick, David, Peter, Sarah, Bushrod, Stuart

Did not receive planning grant for exploring subdivision regulations.

Stuart Levasseur visited to share about Green Up Day. Will be looking for volunteers with trucks to drive trashbag pickup – only has one person for the 6 routes. Contact Stuart.

Energy committee – there is a need for an energy committee. Only needs to be a few people but trying to get one going.

- Brief discussion about the position hosted by TRORC and how that opportunity has past but we could consider participating in something like that in the future.

Flood resilience grant–Geo had conversation with Walter Hastings. \$ to buy up properties in the floodplain that could theoretically get developed. But don't have the capacity because you have to negotiate the price with the landowner first and then go apply for the grant. This is an example of what a town manager could do. Geo will see if TRORC has capacity/willingness to do something like that. If TRORC is interested would we want to pursue that? Walter has identified specific properties. Flood Resilient Communities Fund. State program. David will ask TRORC.

Class 4 Roads:

- Idea to organize several community walks starting with Otto Merrill. People contributing their observations and what they know about the road and what they think of it as a community resource. The weekend of May 20/21 for the first one. Maybe once a month after that.
- See if the conservation commission is interested in partnering (Peter will follow up)
- Geo can commit to leading it or finding someone else.
- Discussion about outreach channels.
- Peter has met a a potential contact who could help with this.

Report out from SoRo Futures conversation last night:

- Geo brought the sample development maps that TRORC provided. Showed high level of development that adds 173 bedrooms. Geo and Stuart recapped some of the group conversations from the night.
- Sarah Wraight is still taking comments so we can still submit comments.
- Nobody was interested in talking about low density and only a few people were interested in talking about the medium density – most people were interested in the high density.
- One of the big limiting factors is the railroad and our inability to do any more crossings whether over or under. And the fact that the railroad owns much of the land along the tracks which limits what people would want to do there. Crossroads property – lease has a 30 day notice for him to have to leave and take his building and if he doesn't take his building the railroad would knock it down and charge him for it.
- Selectboard is considering extending the sewer.

- Transportation plan – the big thing people want to do is make the town more walkable. Lots of complaints about the condition of sidewalks. Lots of excitement for a trail from Payne’s Beach to the school and maybe extending it further too. There are a ton of people who walk/run out that way, something along the river would get used a lot. Selectboard might be interested in resurrecting that project. There’s also money available to fund this work now – many bike grants every year.

Flood Hazard Bylaws:

- Continuing review starting at page 8
- Base flood elevations and floodway limits are what we would adjust to be stricter – that’s the part that describes what is affected by the regulations.
- VII. B. This section seems more confusing than Sharon’s comparable section.
 - 2a – references to Zones A, A1-30, AE needs to be explained.
 - 2b – manufactured homes are a really bad idea in floodprone areas, they can float away quickly.
 - 3 – nonresidential development –question the requirement that the walls be “substantially impermeable to the passage of water” – actually we want the water to be able to go through below the flood level.
 - Two ways we can do with this. We could say, no development in 500 year floodplain. Currently Royalton has no regs in 500 year. We could do a hybrid and say yes in 500 year floodplain if your structure is elevated above a base elevation that we set. It would benefit the homeowner because every foot they go above the flood elevation lowers their insurance.
 - 4. Subdivision clause – why are we even thinking it’s ok to make a subdivision in these areas? Seems concerning. We do have some large parcels in the flood plain that under current regulations could be subdivided and developed.
 - 6. Geo suggests using Sharon model – have to be licensed for highway use and have to be moved out over the winter so that they don’t get stuck there during the iceout / spring flooding.
 - 7. Definition of an accessory structure does not say exactly what an accessory structure is. Also the challenge is if you’re building a roofed structure in the flood zone likely you are building the structure to store something in it, and the stuff being stored in the flood zone is also hazardous. There is also nothing in the regulations about how many you can have. You could put in unlimited small (<100 sqft) structures under current co.
 - 10. Language about “relocated” water course must refer to a watercourse that has relocated itself via a flood – must be maintained in new position, cannot be forced back where it had been.
- VIII Variances.
 - A. by the flood hazard review board... which doesn’t currently exist.
 - B. Basically lays out that if you can’t build on it in conformance with these regulations, they will be allowed to build anyway.
 - Discussion of removing the variances. Sharon has no variance process.
- Enforcement: duty of the officer to enforce this ordinance.

- Penalties: failure to cure may result in a loss of flood insurance and fines. We should spell this out more specifically with a fine schedule per violation.
 - Why is flood insurance in there? Town can make a recommendation to the state that a certain house has violated and shouldn't receive insurance.
 - No collection mechanism for the fees other than the Selectboard applying a lien on the property. Is there a way to add a collection mechanism?
- Next steps: Geo will see if TRORC can send someone to our next meeting with model language now that we have a better understanding of what we currently have and what we would want to change/add.
 - Expanding our reach, still considering whether we want to limit all development in 500 yr plan or whether to put restrictions/requirements on it, figure out the fine issue.

Adjourned at 8:51 PM.