TOWN OF CRAFTSBURY
SELECT BOARD PUBLIC HEARING • TOWN PLAN
MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2025
6:30 PM | CRAFTSBURY TOWN HALL

Present Alison Blaney, Jim Jones, Bruce Urie | TOWN CLERK Michelle Warren

Meeting Agenda

Jim called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm.

Little more than a dozen people attended the Public Hearing, most were members of the Planning Commission and included Alison Lowe from NVDA (Northeastern Vermont Development Association). The Select Board turned the meeting over to Planning Commission Chair Farley Brown for an explanation of the plan.

Farley noted the public hearing was part of the second phase of the adoption process, following a public hearing held earlier this year by the Planning Commission. The Select Board will review for approval at its next regular meeting (Monday, November 3rd). After formal adoption, the next update will be required in eight years. Planning Commission requested guidance from Select Board on next steps. On Select Board agenda for next meeting. Will need to adopt it to keep it moving and will determine how best to guide the Commission.

Select Board members thanked the Farley and the Planning Commission for the extensive amount of work; the plan represents what's important to Craftsbury residents; reflects the countless hours of work and even the last-minute additions around mental health and healthy communities. Farley said it was great to get feedback from community.

QUESTIONS

Q. How old is the resident data that shows where people work, their ages?

A. Info comes from the census: extrapolate that info against most current W2 forms. Census is updated annually but info is always about two years behind.

Q. How many and what types of changes were made to the plan?

A. We followed the guidance of NVDA (to consider restructuring plan). Instead of bulleted items based on what is required, e.g., natural history, heritage, etc., the Plan now reads more like a story of the plan (broken into four sections)

- Part 1: Defining Rural Character (about Act 181 and what Town might be feeling); tied into Act 250
- Part 2: Building Social Connections (childcare, housing, education and civic engagement)
- Part 3: Maintaining Ecological Balance (because conservation commission does a great job writing that section; major changes around flood resiliency and flooding in general)

- Part 4: Connecting People and Places through Services and Infrastructure (changes to village and common designations maps): expanding maps helps businesses access tax incentives

Several groups have already taken advantage of the tax incentives generated from expansion of village and common designations: the Academy, the General Store; the 4Cs, Pete's Greens (rebuilding of the barn after fire). Village designations began in January 2009.

Another big part of plan: the Action Steps. Important so the plan doesn't just sit on a shelf; it becomes a guiding plan. Four main steps:

1. Establish an Ad-Hoc Committee – the advisory committee might include members of Planning Commission; checklists for Priority Actions for Craftsbury
2. Hire Town Administrator – grants etc. to alleviate work (part-time community coordinator); how to fund? are we big enough Town to sustain? Conversation that should be had; help to manage grants, etc. Used to have a minimal number of grants; now ten-fold. The MERF grant is $400K. So many committees, groups, organizations in area have grants. Much more than in prior years. Difference between a grant that supports Town or a grant that supports organization (amounts can prompt external audits: $28K - Town should not have to pay for that). Town Budget is about $1M. Select Board requested the Town Clerk start tracking time spent on administering grants/contracts. Want to know how much time is being expended on this so can gauge to determine how best to proceed.
3. Wastewater Solutions Explored – Specifically for Village; ongoing conversation (Village so constrained with river and wetlands). Septic systems can be impacted; how to deal (do not need a wastewater treatment facility; better a large leach field).
4. Revisit Flood Plain Regulations -- to remain within requirements for NFIP (FEMA National Flood Insurance Program). Flood plain zoning (since 2001) has been in place but not updated in a long time; task that should be taken up by the Planning Commission. Town has had difficulty with response from State Flood Plain Engineer.

Q. What would raising taxes for an administrator look like?

A. It's a long-term goal: get a wastewater system and bring in more affordable housing and add to the community. Tax development incentives (going toward infrastructure): Tax Increment Financing - TIF. There's a Statewide TIF district. TIF districts do not create a new tax or increase existing tax rates; instead, they redirect the future increase in property tax revenue from development within a designated area to fund specific public or private projects within that district. Having statewide TIF is helpful for small communities. It's new - not available yet; multi-billion dollars investment that will add $20 million.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Victoria Hudson
Select Board Clerk