



Town of Bolton  
3045 Theodore Roosevelt Highway  
Bolton VT 05676  
802-434-5075

### **Planning Commission Meeting Minutes**

July 14, 2014  
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.  
Bolton Town Office

Planning Commission members present: Jenifer Andrews, Linda Baker (Chair), Steve Barner, Jim Bralich and Rodney Pingree

Planning Commission members absent: None

Also present: Barbara Tomasi-Gay (Smilie School Principal), Andrew Pond (Bolton School Board, Chair), Paula Gervia (Bolton School Board) and Ralph Deslauriers

Clerk: Carol Devlin

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#### **Agenda**

1. Public Comment
2. Minutes ~ June 9, 2014
3. Town Plan – Education
4. 2015 Municipal Park & Ride Grant Program
5. 2015 Groundwater Resource and Recharge Area Mapping Grant
6. 2015 Municipal Planning Grant
7. Other communications/mail
8. Any other business
9. Adjournment

#### **Call to Order**

Linda Baker called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

#### **Agenda Item #1 ~ Public Comment**

The floor was opened to public comment. Ralph Deslauriers requested that the Planning Commission communicate to the Select Board suggesting that the SB contact the State about the contracts it makes regarding work on Rt. 2. He strongly recommended that contracts require 1) shorter work areas and 2) shorter periods during which roads are dirt/gravel.

#### **Agenda Item #2 ~ Minutes June 9, 2014 Meeting**

Jenifer Andrews made a motion to accept the minutes of June 9, 2014. Steve Barner seconded the motion. The motion carried (4-0).

**Agenda Item #3 ~ Town Plan – Education**

Barbara Tomasi-Gay, Andrew Pond and Paula Gervia came to discuss the issues facing the Bolton School District and Smilie School. Andrew explained that the two most important issues are declining enrollment and a disconnect between the budget and taxes. The State’s tax formula and the penalty for a high student spending are the main causes of the disconnect.

Paula and Andrew explained the proposal for a Modified Union School District. Key points included:

- Only four of six towns need to approve the merger. Non-approving towns will keep a K-4 board.
- If the Department of Education approves the proposal, the merger will be on the November ballot, along with a new union (K-12) board.
- Bolton’s tax rate after a merger will decrease because per student spending will be based on the number of students in the district, not the number of students in Smilie.
- There are currently no plans to close any schools. While the union board may eventually decide to close schools, it cannot do so in the first four years and the town must approve the closure.
- Should the board decide to close a school; the town will have an opportunity to buy the building at favorable terms.
- After the first year children may be redistributed to equalize school size.

Other significant points that were mentioned include:

- Smilie needs approximately 100 students in order to be financially viable.
- For now, a small schools grant is an important part of the school budget but the State has been talking about decreasing it or doing away with it altogether.

Barbara and Andrew also provided a draft of the education section of the Town Plan.

**Agenda Item #4 ~ Municipal Park & Ride Grant**

The PC decided to send the following query to the Select Board: Should the Planning Commission pursue a Park & Ride Grant with the Green Mountain Club?

**Agenda Item #5 ~ Groundwater Resource & Recharge Area Mapping Grant**

Rodney Pingree explained the State Geologist’s procedure for a groundwater study. If such a study is referred to in the Town Plan, the cost is \$1,000. Otherwise, it is \$6,000. Rodney will confirm that the appropriate references are in the draft.

**Agenda Item #6 ~ Municipal Planning Grant**

Carol Devlin explained the 2015 guidelines for the Municipal Planning Grant. After discussing options for grant projects, the PC decided to contact the SB to determine if the SB and PC should work together on an MPG for a capital budget.

**Agenda Item #7 ~ Other communications/mail**

The Green Mountain Club is applying for an Act 250 Amendment and requested that the PC complete the municipal section of the application and send a letter of support. The PC completed the application and signed the letter.

Michael Flock has applied to the ANR to change the use of 3970 Bolton Valley Access from the Black Bear Inn (overflow rooms) to a 3 bedroom single family residence.

The State of Vermont requested comments on the definitions in Act No. 199 (S. 220). The PC had no suggestions.

Stowe had a public meeting re: amendments to Stowe's by-laws.

**Agenda Item #8 ~ Any Other Business**

The next Planning Commission will be Monday, August 11 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. in the Town Office.

**Agenda Item #9 ~ Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Carol Devlin  
Clerk, Planning Commission

*These minutes are unofficial until accepted.*

These minutes were read and accepted by a quorum of the Planning Commission on:

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For the Planning Commission