

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

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

September 15, 2008
6 – 8 p.m.
Smilie School and the Bolton Town Office

Planning Commission members present: Linda Baker, Chair, Steve Barner, Jen Andrews, Jim Bralich, Rodney Pingree

Planning Commission members absent: none

Also present (when the meeting moved to the Bolton Town Office, see Agenda Item #6, Other Business): Select Board; John Devine, R.J. Vallie, Danny Champney, Gene Armstrong, Tom Benoit, Town staff; Deb Lariviere and Jeremy King, Conservation Commission; Sharon Murray, Tony Barbagallo, Tom Longstreth

Clerk: Amy Grover

Agenda

1. Public Comment
 2. Review of status Bolton Valley's ACT 250 applications as needed
 3. Review of potential amendments to the Bolton Land Use and Development Regulations
 4. Minutes ~ July 14, 2008
 5. Other communications/mail
 6. Any other business
 7. Adjournment
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Call to Order

Linda Baker, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Agenda Item #1 ~ Public Comment

Linda Baker opened the floor to public comment. There was none.

Agenda Item #2 Review of status Bolton Valley's ACT 250 applications

- 4 x 4 School Expansion

It was noted that at the July DRB hearing, Bolton Valley had officially withdrawn their conditional use application for the 4 x 4 school expansion on the advice of their lawyer that no permit was needed. In a letter dated 8/20/08, Miron Malboeuf, Bolton ZA, notified Bolton Valley that the expansion requires approval from the DRB and the issuance of a zoning permit.

It was again noted by the group that specifically defining (through possible amendments to the BLUDRs) when Bolton Valley does and does not need to come to the town for permitting remains an issue to be addressed.

Master Plan Application

There has been no communication from the District Office or Bolton Valley regarding rescheduling of the postponed June 26, 2008 ACT 250 hearing, or notification of application/s submitted to the DRB.

Agenda Item #3~ Review (continued) of possible amendments to the Bolton Land Use and Development Regulations

Tabled until the next meeting due to time constraints.

Agenda Item #4 – Minutes July 14, 2008 Meeting

Rodney Pingree made a motion to accept the minutes of July 15, 2008. Steve Barner seconded the motion. All were in favor, motion carried.

Agenda Item #5 - Other communications/mail

It was noted that Municipal Planning Grant applications for 2009 had been received. The PC will not be submitting a 2009 application.

It was noted that the PC had received a draft of Jericho's zoning regulations.

The group reviewed the VLCT training opportunities for fall 08- winter'09.

Agenda Item #6 ~ Any other business

At 6:30 p.m., the PC moved their meeting to the Bolton Town Office to meet in conjunction with the Select Board to discuss the park and ride. Notification was posted at the school.

Linda Baker reviewed the PC's memo to the Select Board concerning a park and ride;

“The Planning Commission is disappointed that the Select Board has voted 3 – 2 against creating a sanctioned park and ride commuter lot in Bolton. The Planning Commission feels that this decision is shortsighted, not only in light of hardships our residents are facing due to rising fuel costs, but with respect to the global environmental outlook as well. The Planning Commission asks that the Select Board reconsider their decision and to take into account the opportunities for benefits that a park and ride lot could provide;

- A designated parking area in Bolton for commuters traveling (by vehicle and bicycle) outside of Bolton and to Bolton Valley Resort.
- Reduction of abandoned vehicles left unsafely and in the way of the snowplows at the bottom of the Bolton Valley Access Road in winter by drivers who are unable to make it up the road.
- Decreases in fuel costs and consumption by ride sharing/commuting.

- Reduction in local/global CO2 emissions.
- Potential to create a Bolton stop on the Link Express Bus traveling between Montpelier and Burlington.
- Potential to provide public transportation for customers and workers on the Link Express Bus to Bolton Valley through partnership with Bolton Valley's shuttle bus.

The Planning commission understands that the SB has concerns regarding a commuter lot becoming an area of attractive nuisance, potentially targeted for vehicle vandalism and/or criminal activity. The PC contacted the Richmond Police Department to ask for input on their experiences with the Richmond commuter lot. Officer Sarah Messier, a four year veteran of the force, stated that;

- No area is ever exempt from crime, and that the Richmond commuter lot has not served to increase or decrease crime in Richmond.
- There have been very few reported thefts/vandalism at the commuter lot.
- Vehicles are vandalized everywhere, especially now that vehicle parts are being targeted for scrap metal sales.
- In four years, there has been one instance of "drug activity."

The PC also feels it is important to note that the approved Bolton Town Plan addresses a commuter lot in Section 4.2, Transportation Goals;

'e. Seek ways to expand car-pooling and alternative modes of transportation.

1. Work with the Agency of Transportation and the CCMPO to locate and build park and ride facilities, for example near the intersection of the Bolton Valley Road and Route 2.'

The PC certainly understands that there are concerns attached to creating a sanctioned commuter park and ride lot, including the lack of an immediate police presence here in Bolton. However, the PC feels that in this instance, the benefits of a commuter lot would far outweigh the potential risks, and respectfully asks that the Select Board to reconsider their decision."

Linda stated that given the current economic climate, for the reasons stated in the PC memo to the Select Board, a park and ride in Bolton was viewed as a need, and asked the Select Board for clarification of their decision.

The Select Board stated that although a park and ride would be a great transportation initiative, they voted against creating one as:

- The town would have to lease the land from the state (currently the area used as the staging area for the I89 bridge repairs had been identified as a possible location for park and ride lot), or purchase land.

- The lot size (again, referencing the old staging area) is too small, allowing for only 15 – 20 cars, which wouldn't make any difference, and site distance could be an issue.
- The town would be responsible for maintenance costs (grading and plowing) and lighting costs.
- It would become an area attractive to abandon junk vehicles, as is the small unofficial parking area at the bottom of the BV Access Road (it was noted that a large boat had been left there for several months), and to trouble makers, noting that they had reports that vehicles were frequently broken into (a weekly basis) at the Richmond park and ride.
- Neighbors would have issues with the lighting, headlights, and lack of privacy. It was noted that they had received complaints regarding the small, unofficial parking area at the bottom of the BV Access Road.

Group discussion included the following:

- A park and ride is clearly stated in the town plan as a transportation goal.
- Grant funding is available, and whether grant funding would allow for purchase of property.
- If lighting is a requirement.
- Costs of maintenance and electricity.
- Lot capacities would need to be addresses in accordance with the BLUDRs.
- No overnight parking would be allowed.
- Area under the I80 overpass not suitable due to site distance and bridges.
- Research and identify other areas with less of the noted issues (site distance, neighbors, capacity) with the assistance of CCRPC mapping.
- Whether the LINK EXPRESS bus would be mandated to stop.

The PC noted that it would be beneficial to research the issues and questions, find answers, and then continue the conversation.

Leslie Pelch noted that she was still Bolton's CCRPC representative and would be assuming the position of Chair. The group briefly discussed CCRPC's updated SRI definition.

Sharon Murray noted that:

- With respect to the Bolton Valley 4 x 4 school expansion, subsequent to receiving the ZA letter (previously mentioned, Agenda Item #2) Bolton Valley filed an appeal of that decision by the ZA, to be heard by the DRB at their October meeting. The group noted the critical need for year round viability for the resort, and briefly discussed alpine ski facility uses and definitions.
- The Conservation Commission would be applying for a '09 municipal planning grant to complete a more detailed natural resources inventory.
- The Kokell subdivision had received DRB approval, with conditions, and was still in the ACT 250 process.
- Trail work had been taking place on the Preston Pond trails.

- Due to time constraints CRAGVT discussion was tabled.

Jen Andrews submitted her resignation to the PC, effective 12/31/08. Amy will put notice of the vacancy in the Bolton Gazette.

The next meeting of the PC will be held on Monday, October 6, 2008, 6 – 8 p.m. at the Town Office.

Agenda Item #7 – Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Amy Grover
Clerk, Planning Commission

These minutes are unofficial until accepted.

These minutes were read and accepted by the Planning Commission on

_____, 2008

Linda Baker, Chair