

**TOWN OF WOODFORD VT**  
**WOODFORD TOWN HALL**  
**ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENTS (unapproved)**  
**April 11, 2022**

**Members Present:** Susan Wright-Chair, Ed Shea, John Dovitski, Chuck Suss

**Also Present:** Callie Fishburn (BCRC), and Cat Bryars (BCRC)

**1. Call to order:**

Susan called the meeting to order at 5:10PM

**2. Agenda Adjustments:**

There were no adjustments.

**3. Public Comments:**

There were no public comments

**5. Approval of Minutes (03/14/2022):**

Susan addressed the discussion from last month's meeting regarding reconstruction of buildings removed or destroyed. She clarified that the current bylaws do require a permit application to be applied for within 1 year of the event. It was previously thought that a permit was not required. This requirement addresses non-conforming buildings in order to allow replacement only for what was previously there. The normal approval process must also be followed. There are currently 2 properties that have been destroyed where the owners may possibly be looking to rebuild.

**Motion** made by Ed approve the minutes as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> from Chuck. There being no further discussion, all in favor, **Motion Carries.**

**6. BCRC Consultation and Review**

Callie Fishburn and Cat Bryars proceeded to explain to the board that BCRC's contract with the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development requires BCRC to conduct consultation meetings with all towns and villages in the region. A handout was distributed to all members outlining the questions and topics to be discussed during the consultation (attached). The purpose of the consultation is to see where the towns stand on the town plans, zoning bylaws and any other issues they can help with in order to help satisfy Vermont's statutory planning goals. The Woodford Town Plan expires at the end of 2023. Both Callie and Cat stated that they would help the board with revisions including updating all the statistics. Depending on the extent of the revisions, detailed revisions or simple modifications, will determine whether or not the Town would need to apply for a grant. Regardless, the expense to the Town should be minimal.

Discussion continued regarding several aspects of the Plan. It was explained that if the Town Plan expires, then the Zoning Bylaws would not be in effect. Chuck stated that reviewing, discussing and changing the zoning bylaws or the Town Plan is a great undertaking for the board requiring more time and meetings. Both Callie and Cat agreed but responded that if the process was started early enough, and with their help, then perhaps it wouldn't be so burdensome. Susan stated that the first thing that needs to be done should be to re-read the Town Plan and determine which sections need updating and only focus on those areas. Callie explained that the State is looking for towns to include Act 174, the State's energy goals for 2050, but this is not mandatory. Requirements for Act 171, forest integrity, and state statute section 248, public utility, will need to be incorporated into the revised Plan to meet changes in state statutes. It was asked whether or not there is more movement towards State control vs Municipal control. The response was that there have been conversation towards this but have been scaled down. The board emphasized that the Plan needs to ensure that Woodford still retains the same qualities that draw people to live here.

The board thanked Callie and Cat for their time and attendance at the meeting.

#### **7. Other Business:**

Susan informed the board that she received from James Matthews, the State's determination concerning the violations from the State of Vermont, Environmental Division in regards to his neglect of obtaining a shore line protection permit. He was also inquiring what the next step with the Town would be. It was agreed by the board that since the State set forth building revision requirements that needed to be completed by May 22, 2022, that he should attend the June meeting for continuance of his town permit. This will give the board time to be sure these revisions have been completed.

#### **8. Adjourn:**

**Motion** made by Chuck to adjourn, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ed. There being no further discussion; all in favor, **Motion Carries**. Meeting adjourned at 6:50pm.

**Next meeting May 9, 2022 5:00pm at the Woodford Town Hall**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Susan Wright

## BCRC enhanced consultation review - Town of Woodford

### **The Purpose of Enhanced Consultation**

The Bennington County Regional Commission's contract with the Department of Economic, Housing, and Community Development (Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development), requires the Commission to carry out consultation meetings with all of the towns and villages in the region. A similar process will be conducted throughout the state in an effort to develop a more consistent and meaningful review process and to improve the effectiveness of municipal and regional plans, and planning programs, in achieving the goals of Title 24, Section 4302 (<http://www.leg.state.vt.us/statutes/fullsection.cfm?Title=24&Chapter=117&Section=04302>).

### **The Purpose, Objective and Outcome of this Process**

The consultation process involves a discussion of important local and regional issues, local planning and training needs, new statutory requirements, planning programs and opportunities available through the BCRC, and, importantly, consideration of how effectively the municipal plan addresses Vermont's statutory planning goals. One important product of this process is a qualitative review of the municipal plan, including suggestions as to how the plan might be improved to more effectively satisfy the statutory goals referenced above. Specific findings are reported on each of the following questions:

1. Which parts of the plan are particularly effective in implementing the statewide goals?
2. In which areas does the plan fail to effectively advance those statewide goals?
3. What specific opportunities exist to improve the town plan so that it more effectively addresses the statewide goals?

This consultation and plan review is separate and distinct from the municipal plan approval process carried out pursuant to 24 V.S.A. Section 4350, but it does contribute to the municipal confirmation action specified under that section of the Planning and Development Act.

## Statutory Consultation Meeting – Common Draft Agenda

Agenda Item	Major Points and Resources
<b>I. LOCAL PLANNING NEEDS</b>	
a. Plan recommendations from the last review	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review any required new elements and recommendations for the plan.</li> <li>2. How well is the plan working?</li> </ol>
b. Training needs of the municipality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are there topics about which you would like more information and training?</li> <li>2. What format works best for your community?</li> </ol>
<b>II. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION</b>	
a. Local permitting (note this is a discussion only, the RPC will not be evaluating bylaws).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are the bylaws up to date? Do they implement the plan?</li> <li>2. Are there specific issues regarding the local permitting process that need attention?</li> <li>3. Review the merits of a DRB system (if applicable). Utilize the table from the <u>VPIC materials</u> page 4</li> </ol>
b. Non-regulatory implementation priorities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss the municipality's priorities related to the plan.</li> </ol>
<b>III. HOW CAN WE HELP?</b>	
a. Overview of RPC programs and projects and local priorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Overview of RPC programs and projects that may be of assistance.</li> <li>2. Where has the RPC been the most valuable?</li> </ol>
b. RPC board representation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review participation by municipal representatives.</li> <li>2. Do you hear enough from us? What would you suggest to improve our communications and assistance?</li> </ol>
<b>IV. CONFIRMATION</b>	
Confirmation benefits and requirements 24 V.S.A. Section 4350.	

**Enhanced Consultation Report**

**Bennington County Regional Commission**

<b>Municipality: Woodford</b>		<b>Date of Meeting: April 11, 2022</b>
Attendance:		
<b>I. LOCAL PLANNING NEEDS</b>		
Presentation of the municipal plan assessment and associated recommendations	Plan review sheet is attached	
Discussion of training needs of the municipality		
Review of the new economic development element and related recommendations		
<b>II. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION</b>		
Discuss the municipality's local permitting process		
Discuss the municipality's non-regulatory implementation priorities		
<b>III. BCRC SUPPORT AND LOCAL/REGIONAL ISSUES</b>		
Overview of RPC programs and projects		
RPC board representation		
Discussion of other local and regional issues and priorities		

**Municipal Plan Review****Date of Plan Adoption: November 18, 2015****TOWN PLAN CONTEXT**

Woodford has had an active planning process for many years and the members of the planning commission are experienced and effective. The current plan was updated in 2015 and will need to be updated again in 2023. Woodford should begin planning for the plan update in 2022. The Town Plan update should revise outdated statistics, reflect bylaw changes completed in 2020, and incorporate changes in state statute around Section 248 public utility planning and requirements for Act 171 forest integrity, among other topics.

**MAJOR FINDINGS:** The following points provide an outline of the plan's effectiveness in addressing statewide planning goals and identifies areas where improvements can be made.

**Strengths – Which parts of the plan are particularly effective in implementing the statewide goals?**

- Strong vision and goal statements at the beginning of the plan
- Strong natural resource protection policies and flood hazard area policies (Bylaw-related: may want to integrate flood regulations with zoning bylaw to better implement the town plan's flood resilience goals.)
- Strong stormwater management policies
- Implementation section is specific – the section specifically makes reference to the need for the town plan and bylaws to be consistent with each other and references additional implementation options.

**Weaknesses -- In which areas does the plan fail to effectively advance those statewide goals?**

- Statistics throughout the plan and some datasets are outdated and require updating. Narratives and policies should be re-examined accordingly when new data is incorporated.
- Economic policies are good, but discussion of economic development could be expanded in light of recent developments and regional development trends.
- Historic Resources – the plan mentions historic resources and lists several historic sites, but no historic resource policies are explicitly mentioned.
- The town's housing needs could be examined and discussed in more depth

**Opportunities -- What specific opportunities exist to improve the town plan so that it more effectively addresses the statewide goals?**

The 2023 town plan update presents an opportunity to incorporate an Act 174-compliant energy chapter and forest block language to comply with Act 171. Statistics from the 2020 Census and more recent ACS 5-year estimates will indicate more recent population, housing, and economic trends. The plan can integrate discussion of practical issues the town has recently dealt with such as the potential for school merger resulting from Act 46 (VT 2015) and the use of municipal ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act 2021) funding for local priority projects.