

The Town of St. Albans
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Town Hall, 579 Lake Road
May 10th, 2016 at 6:30 p.m.

Minutes

Present: S. Smith (Chair), B. Brigham (Vice Chair), G. Henderson (Clerk), A. Voegele, B. Deso
Staff Present: Becky Perron, Zoning Administrator, Carrie Johnson, Town Manager, AJ Johnson
Public Present: Stan Dukas & David McWilliams

CALL TO ORDER

S. Smith called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

MUNICIPAL STORMWATER MANAGEMENT RULES PRESENTATION

Andres Torizzo and Wayne Elliot appeared before the Planning Commission to give an overview of a Stormwater presentation they had been working on in conjunction with Juli Beth Hinds. The consultants have been working on the stormwater project with the City and Town for the past year. The City of St. Albans received a Municipal Planning Grant with the Town of St. Albans as a co-applicant. The money received has been used to develop a plan to improve the regulations that will help impaired waterways such as Rugg Brook and Stevens Brook.

In December 2012, St. Albans City and Town were identified by the State of Vermont as areas with stormwater impaired watersheds. The Town is now subject to the Vermont MS4 general permit. MS4, or Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System, is a combination of catch basins, storm drains, and any stormwater conveyance system used to bring stormwater to surface waters. Being identified as an area with a stormwater impaired watersheds means the Town is required to adopt a local stormwater ordinance, administer and report on Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination, adopt and administer post-construction stormwater controls for some new development and redevelopment, adopt and administer construction- phase erosion/ sediment control for other development, adopt, administer, and enforce stream buffer requirements and enforce six “minimum measures”.

A. Torizzo showed the PC a graphic of the impaired waterways and where they flow through the City and Town. Stevens brook was displayed as the purple watershed and Rugg brook was displayed as the pink watershed. He pointed out I-89, specifically exit 19. “This is really the impact area that is driving all of this regulation from the State,” he explained. “The State has deemed this area as being stormwater impaired, subject to the Flow Restoration Plan and the MS4 requirement”. C. Johnson stated that Steven and Rugg brooks are not impaired due to pollution, but rather the volume of stormwater dumped into the brooks during storms which have caused significant erosion. “The best approach is to control the flow that is dumped into the stream”, A. Torizzo explained.

A. Voegele stated that east of the interstate is mostly undeveloped. There are houses, but it isn’t highly developed, he explained. “So wouldn’t the excess water flowing into the watershed be due to natural circumstances”, he asked? A. Torizzo agreed that much of the problem in that area was due to natural circumstances. “So if we can’t hold Mother Nature accountable, how does the State expect us to deal with the problems Mother Nature has created” A. Voegele wondered? A. Torizzo explained that most of the area east of the interstate is steep which contributes a heavier flow to the impaired watershed area. W. Elliot also stated that building the interstate bisected the natural flow of the water and the water now concentrates at several points to seep westerly.

G. Henderson wondered if managing Steven and Rugg brooks’ water flow would take care of other problems downstream and within the Lake. A. Torizzo explained that the two problems are linked but they will be managed in two separate processes. The overall MS4 permit does deal with Lake pollution but the driving force behind the State designating the Town and City as impaired watersheds is Rugg and Steven brooks. We are improving the quality of the streams and rivers for the state of the Lake.

B. Brigham was aware that Chittenden County has been going through this process for a while. He wondered if various city and towns hired full time enforcement officers for MS4 compliance or if another position absorbed the job? W. Elliot explained that Chittenden County is about ten years ahead in this process. Most of Chittenden County adopted their Stormwater Ordinance between 2003 and 2008. Each ordinance is a little different; two or three towns have created a stormwater utility which requires full time

staff. The process depends on the size of the community, how the Public Works Department operates, etc. There is not a one size fits all method.

A. Voegelé asked if A. Torizzo thought the Town should hire an engineer to oversee the process. A. Torizzo stated the process was very technical and could go a couple of ways. He added that a consultant could be hired as needed.

G. Henderson wondered if it was unusual for other communities to collaborate. A. Torizzo stated that he has seen several communities collaborate.

A. Voegelé asked what the implications of doing nothing would be. What would happen if the Town did not absorb this responsibility, he wondered? A. Torizzo stated if more impervious surfaces are created in the future the State could apply some sort of retroactive permit. Worst case scenario, the Town may be denied grants.

C. Johnson stated the Town is on a fluid schedule. When the Town submits their Flow Restoration Plan they will include specific named projects, a flexible timeline and financial information. The schedule may be revised as needed but the Town does need to continue to show progress.

G. Henderson wondered if the consultants had developed a draft stormwater ordinance for the Town. A. Torizzo confirmed they had.

Selectman, D. McWilliams asked what the percentage of stormwater was going into the sewer plant in the City. A. Torizzo estimated thirty percent. The City will need to monitor the plant and submit yearly reports.

The PC had a general discussion about agriculture and how it affects stormwater. The PC thanked the consultants for their time and information.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The PC reviewed the Rewes Drive solar application. They had reviewed this project when it was proposed previously and had no new questions.

MINUTES

MOTION: G. Henderson made a motion to sign the minutes of the meeting dated April 26th, 2016. A. Voegelé seconded. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: B. Brigham made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. B. Deso seconded. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
AJ Johnson, Administrative Assistant

Sam Smith, Chair

Date

Brent Brigham, Vice Chair

Date

Grant Henderson, Clerk

Date

Al Voegelé

Date

Brendan Deso

Date