

Plainfield Planning Commission Meeting

July 18, 2016

Present: Will Colgan, Jean Hamilton, Cito Hardy

Agenda: Approval of minutes from previous meeting; Discuss draft zoning;

Approval of Minutes: Cito make a motion. Jean seconds. Approved.

Discuss Draft Zoning: reviewing Jens Hilke's input on natural inventories report and zoning. Planning Commission acknowledges the following recommendations:

- consider shifting "critical wildlife habitat" to "significant wildlife habitat" and define "significant wildlife habitat". "critical w. h." is a specific federal designation which may not be appropriate. See section 6.3, 7.1.3, and 7.5.4
- review section 6.2 to clarify the language and make the language more specific and enforceable. "undue adverse effect on the..."
- section 6.3: consider including the map of special wildlife areas.
- In 7.5.4 a few new terms are used and not defined "Represent an effective and unified treatment of the development site, including provisions as appropriate for the preservation or protection of surface and ground waters; wetlands and floodplains; significant topographic features, including hilltops and ridgelines; areas of steep slope or shallow soil; **significant resource lands**, including agricultural and forest land; historic or archaeological sites and structures; **natural and critical habitat areas**; and open spaces, including scenic views and vistas;
- 7.5.5: prime woodlands is not defined.

- Jens says "I think I can be most helpful in working with you all to define Critical Wildlife Habitat and specifically mapping that element once you've defined it. I'd love to meet with you all to talk that through and can provide some sample definitions used in other towns. Here's one from Vermont Natural Resources Council's "[Community Strategies for Vermont's Forests and Wildlife](http://vnrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/VNRC-Forestland-Conservation-10-1-links.pdf) (<http://vnrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/VNRC-Forestland-Conservation-10-1-links.pdf>) that I helped with. Note – I did suggest using "significant" instead of "critical" since "Critical wildlife habitat is defined federally as part of the endangered species law.

Significant (or Sensitive) Wildlife Habitat: Those natural features that contribute to the survival and/ or reproduction of the native wildlife of [town]. This shall include, but is not limited to, (1) deer wintering areas (i.e. deeryards); (2) habitat for rare, threatened and endangered species (state or federally listed); (3) concentrated black bear feeding habitat (mast stands); (4) riparian areas and surface waters; (5) wetlands and vernal pools; (6) wildlife travel corridors; (7) high elevation bird habitat (8) ledge, talus and cliff habitat; and (9) habitat identified by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife as either significant wildlife habitat or necessary wildlife habitat in accordance with 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a)(8)(A).

And then a further definition of “Wildlife Travel Corridors”

Wildlife Travel Corridor: A large area that permits the direct travel or spread of animals or plants from one area or region to another, either by the gradual spread of a species’ population along the route or by the movement of individual members of the species. Generally, this area is likely to include several specific wildlife road crossing areas and is characterized by undeveloped forested corridors, including forest cover reaching to road rightsof-way, which serve to link large tracts of unfragmented forest habitat.”

- Will recommends addressing the missing and vague terms as noted above with improved definitions that are clear, specific and enforceable. Further, he recommends reviewing other towns’ plans for guidance.

- Will is going to send June 27 zoning draft to Conservation Commission, Charlie Cogbill, Michael Billingsley, Rob Bridges, and other people who have contacted Will. Then Will will set up a meeting with Conservation Commission, Jens Hilke, and Brett Engstrom to further develop natural inventory/sensitive environmental features in zoning.

Cito moves to adjourn. Jean seconds.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:49 PM