

**TOWN OF WARREN  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
NOVEMBER 12, 2001**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Susan Aylesworth, Chair; Clayton Cormier, Tara Hamilton, Donald La Haye, Lisa Miserendino.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Margo Wade, DRB/PC Assistant.

**AGENDA:**

- 1) 7:30 p.m. Call to Order
- 2) Land Use & Development Regulations – discussion of Superior Court ruling & amendment process
- 3) Affordable Housing – update
- 4) Brook Road Bridge #7 – discussion of PC recommendations to the Selectboard
- 5) Proposed DRB Rules of Procedure – review & discussion
- 6) Other Business:
  - a) Signing of minutes

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**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Hamilton called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

**II. LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS**

The commission reviewed amendments included in the Propose Addendum and other comments received by Ms. Wade thus far. These include:

Proposed Addendum

Table 2.1 – Forest Reserve District, Table 2.12 – Bobbin Mill Commercial District, Section 4.3 – Campers & Temporary Shelters, Section 9.2 – Exemptions, and Section 10.2 – Definitions.

Other Comments

- Accommodating the municipal wastewater treatment cluster system for the West Hill Road residents at the Coats Gravel Pit.
- Consider whether to leave Beaver Lane in the AVR District even though it was not part of the Alpine Village development.
- Clarifying the Agricultural & Forestry because the Town does not require permits for these, but they are included in the permitted use category.
- Mr. Simpson’s September comments including district boundary definitions and adding Power Generating Facility to the Bobbin Mill.

Ms. Wade will talk to Reta Goss regarding Beaver Lane, and Brian Shupe regarding the Coats Gravel Pit, agricultural & Forestry uses, and Bobbin Mill and report back to the PC at the hearing.

Amendment will be discussed in detail at the November 26<sup>th</sup> public hearing.

**III. AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Ms. Wade reminded the commission about the interim presentation of the housing report at the Steering Committee meeting on Thursday, November 15<sup>th</sup> at the General Wait House in Waitsfield.

**IV. BROOK ROAD BRIDGE #7**

The commission discussed Ms. Hamilton's memo to the Selectboard regarding the Brook Road Bridge #7. The group approved submitting the memo to the Selectboard with minor changes. Ms. Aylesworth and Ms. Wade will attend the Selectboard meeting on Tuesday, November 13<sup>th</sup>.

MEMORANDUM

To: Warren Selectboard  
From: Warren Planning Commission  
Re: Brook Road Bridge #7  
Date: November 12, 2001

The Planning Commission would like to thank the Selectboard for the opportunity to provide recommendations regarding the rehabilitation of the Brook Road Bridge #7 that crosses Freeman Brook in Warren Village.

Given that it is in the Town's interest to steward the character of the village and prevent the incremental erosion of its sense of place, the Town and AOT are obligated to consider how this project will affect the present and future quality of life of both village and town residents -- as well as the historic and aesthetic characteristics of our unique and charismatic village center. We are in fact being provided an opportunity to *enhance* the village's local character with this project. Since this bridge is a critical gateway to our village, this is indeed a perfect opportunity to insist on quality and attention to detail that will surely affect the feel of the village for a long time to come. Therefore, the Planning Commission wishes to make the following recommendations:

**WIDTH:** Given that maintaining the village's 25 mph speed limit is critically important to village residents -- and that widening the road as it crosses the bridge is certain to discourage travelers from decreasing their speed as they descend Brook Road and enter the village -- we suggest that the proposed additional four feet of road width be allocated to a four-foot sidewalk on the north side of the bridge.

The current curb-to-curb width of the bridge is approximately 20 feet. For a 25 mph "rural collector" with a projected 20-year traffic volume of 1300 to 1600 ADT, the Standards allow for 9-foot travel lanes with 2-foot shoulders (for traffic up to 1500 ADT), which would result in a 22-foot curb-to-curb road. Although McFarland-Johnson is recommending a 24-foot curb-to-curb bridge dimension (with 10-foot travel lanes and 2-foot shoulders), we suggest that if a 24-foot road bed is in fact agreed upon that 9-foot travel lanes are utilized, the south side of the bridge have a 2-foot curb, and the north side's shoulder be dedicated to a four-foot sidewalk, which would total to a 24-foot width. If 10-foot travel lanes are deemed necessary, then the remaining four feet would be utilized by the sidewalk on the north side, and there would be no shoulder on the south side. In any case, the new width should not exceed 24 feet, which is the current approximate width of Brook Road on either side of the bridge.

**SIDEWALK:** It is critical that a sidewalk be included in this project. Although there is not currently a sidewalk along Brook Road to which the bridge's proposed sidewalk would connect, there is an

obvious need for one and the town should take a proactive stance now, when given the opportunity, to ensure that a sidewalk running the length of Brook Road will be a possibility. The Planning Commission is currently working on securing funds to complete a second phase of the 1996 Village Improvement Plan, which will include the Brook Road section of the village. Among other things, this plan will address vehicular and pedestrian traffic flow, and make suggestions for integrating a sidewalk system that connects the Warren School with the heart of the village.

**FOLIAGE:** All effort should be made to prevent destruction of the mature trees that line the stream banks of the Freeman Brook on either side of the Brook Road Bridge. Any trees that must be removed in the rehabilitation should be replaced by the same or larger-sized trees. These trees provide both an aesthetic canopy over the stream as well as an essential ecological function for the well being of the stream.

**ALIGNMENT:** The alignment of the bridge and the road as it approaches the bridge from both directions should be maintained, as it currently exists. Straightening it will only encourage increased speeds in the village.

**RAILING:** It is recommended that the Town pursue either a railing similar in nature to the cable-and-post railing installed when the bridge was built, or a blocked concrete railing similar to the railings currently on the Main Street Bridge south of the Warren Store (or a scaled-down version of the "Texas Classic" railing recently installed in Chester, Vermont). The aesthetic and complementary appeal of the cable-and-post railing is thoroughly outlined in Mary Jo Llewellyn's report (p. 4). As the Ornamental Railing Study for Historic Bridges is as yet unfinished and unavailable to utilize as a resource, it is recommended that the town pursue, if necessary, the "design exception process" in order to be able to incorporate a more appropriate railing than the choices currently available. In no circumstance should a W-beam steel railing be allowed in the rehabilitation of this historic bridge as "the heavy-industrial, mass-produced material and the contemporary, elliptical shape of the cold-rolled beams are not compatible with the natural, light-weight materials and virtually hand-made buildings and structures of Warren Village."

These recommendations are supported by several points made in the various reports prepared for the town and AOT in analyzing how best to approach this project. As noted in the Historic Resource Identification Report written by Mary Jo Llewellyn, the bridge in question is a contributing structure in the Warren Village Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Changes to this bridge are therefore deemed to affect the entire district because changes within an historic district impact the integrity of the district as a whole. Also, according to the Vermont State Standards, if a structure is deteriorated beyond the point of being reasonable to repair, the Standards recommend replacement in kind or replacement with a new structure compatible with the character of the historic district within which it is located. McFarland-Johnson concurs on page 5 of their engineering report that "the design of the bridge will have to be compatible with the historic district."

## **V. PROPOSED DRB RULES OF PROCEDURE**

The group generally discussed the proposed DRB Rules of Procedure. The document is more formal and comprehensive than the current meeting format. Since the DRB will be the board working under and most affected by the document the PC decided to ask the DRB to take the lead on the final rules. Ms. Wade has distributed the document to the DRB already, but will coordinate a meeting with the two boards to discuss the document.

Of concern to the PC is the rules amendment process, the clarity of the employment of alternates, and the formality of the proposed rules.

**VI. OTHER BUSINESS**

a) Signing of minutes

**MOTION by Mr. Cormier, seconded by Mr. La Haye to approve the October 22, 2001 meeting minutes as submitted. VOTE: unanimous; motion carried.**

Items for the next PC meeting:

Town Facilities – Ruby Blair House provisions, Town Hall assessment  
Scenic Roads (Dec. 10)

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION by Mr. Cormier, seconded by Mr. La Haye to adjourn the meeting. VOTE: unanimous; motion carried.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Margo B. Wade  
DRB/PC Assistant

**PLANNING COMMISSION**

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Susan Aylesworth, Chair (date)

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Clayton Cormier (date)

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Tara Hamilton (date)

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Donald La Haye (date)

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Lisa Miserendino (date)