

Meeting Minutes for Glover Planning Commission February Mtg.

Feb 26, 2025 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada) ID: 826 0522 1189

Quick recap

The group discussed the town plan, flood zone permits, and the potential impact of river corridor protection on properties in Glover. They also deliberated on the advantages and disadvantages of building in flood zones and river corridors, and the timeline and process for developing and implementing a flood hazard bylaw. Lastly, they touched on the progress of various projects, the planning commission's membership and operations, and the upcoming Town Meeting.

Next steps

- Jack to work on gathering information about the river corridor mapping in the next few days.
- Jack to set up a session with planning commission members to review flood zone and river corridor mapping.
- Jack to email co-chairs when ready to schedule the mapping review session.
- Planning Commission to include formal appreciation for Ann in the minutes for her help with the town green ownership.
- Nella to reach out to Karen Garrity about getting back on track with the ready grant for the town green project.
- James and Nella to re-engage with Hope about her planning commission membership status.
- Planning Commission to follow up with Carmela about her planning commission membership status.
- Planning Commission to prepare a survey for distribution on town meeting day.
- Planning Commission to prepare a presentation for town meeting, including updates on ongoing projects and flood hazard zoning.
- Randy to speak with Nick (moderator) ahead of time to plan the timing of the Planning Commission's presentation at town meeting.

Summary

Town Plan and Flood Zone Discussion

In the meeting, James opened the discussion by summarizing the group's recent activities, including a meeting about the town plan and the upcoming public survey. He also mentioned an extended timeline for the project. Doug and Jack were tasked with incorporating flood zone information into the town plan. The group then discussed a flood hazard bylaw, with Jack asking for any questions or concerns. Ann raised a question about the need for a public hearing for each item, to which Jack clarified that not all items require a hearing.

Flood Zone Permit Categories Explained

Jack outlined the five categories of flood zone permits, stating some require an administrative permit, others are conditional, prohibited, exempted, or require a state permit. Jack also clarified that he serves as the flood zone administrator, responsible for approving simple projects such as accessory structures less than 500 square feet. The current regulations are in effect until 2027, and there are ongoing discussions about potential future changes. Mariel Hess asked about the current regulations and Jack explained that any changes would depend on the planning commission's decisions.

River Corridor Protection Town Strategies

Jack discussed the potential impact of river corridor protection on properties in Glover, noting that it might not be significant due to the limited number of buildings in the area. He mentioned an article about Royalton's attempt to adopt a similar model bylaw, which faced organized opposition. Jack also highlighted that Hardwick and Derby are the only towns in the area to have adopted river corridor regulation, and that the state plans to take control of all river corridors by 2028. He suggested that towns could maintain control over development in river corridors if they adopt regulations at least as stringent as the state's planned ones. Randy questioned the town's administrative capacity to handle this, and Jack explained that the zoning administrator and Design Review Board would be involved in the process. James recalled a previous meeting where the group leaned towards a certain approach.

Flood Zone Plan and River Corridor

The team discussed the potential inclusion of the river corridor in their flood zone plan. Jack mentioned that the town of Royalton was facing opposition due to the inclusion of the river corridor, which was seen as a bigger land control by the town. Elizabeth questioned whether the state would take over if the town didn't, and Jack confirmed that the state would only take over if the town hadn't already adopted the bylaw. James suggested proceeding with the flood zone now and setting up the river corridor expansion as a follow-up vote in 2028. Jack agreed, noting that adopting a bylaw is a long process involving public hearings and approvals. The team concluded that presenting both parts of the plan could help determine the best course of action.

River Corridor Mapping and Opposition

Jack discussed potential opposition to the River Corridor part of the project, but suggested that if people understood the need for it, they could accept it. Ann emphasized the importance of studying the River Corridor. James noted the poor quality of the mapping. Jack and Town discussed problems with the flood zone mapping in Glover village, which Jack attributed to discrepancies in the elevations between the Fema flood map and the Vermont natural resources Atlas. Jack mentioned that Sasha Peeler was planning to contact the mapping people to bring attention to the issue.

Flood Zones: Advantages, Disadvantages & Mapping

The meeting focused on the advantages and disadvantages of building in flood zones and river corridors. Jack clarified that the river corridors are not related to insurance, but are controlled by the state due to past flooding experiences. He emphasized the need for education on the flood bylaw and the process of obtaining permits for changes in flood zones. Jack also mentioned the importance of accurate mapping for property owners to determine if they are in a flood zone or river corridor. The team agreed on the necessity of hiring surveyors or engineers to determine the exact location of flood zones or river corridors on a property.

Flood Hazard Bylaw Planning and Timeline

The planning commission discusses the timeline and process for developing and implementing a flood hazard bylaw. Jack suggests aiming for a draft bylaw to be presented at a public meeting in mid-July, followed by potential revisions and approval by the planning commission before sending it to the select board. The commission also plans to give a brief presentation about the bylaw at the upcoming town meeting. Jack clarifies that the Design Review Board (DRB) will not be needed until after the bylaw is passed and a permit process is in place.

Town Green Project and Conflict Resolution

The meeting focused on the Town Green project, with James leading the discussion. The project has received a six-month extension on its Mpg grant, allowing for the finalization of the design and management of construction documents. However, there was a conflict of interest with Coe and Co. Architecture, which has been resolved by the planning commission members agreeing to work pro bono on the project. The conflict arose due to a town ordinance regarding conflict of interest. The planning commission also discussed a potential trade with Phil Brooks for a new lean-to shed in exchange for the fire station parcel. The commission is motivated to gain possession of the parcel to move the project forward.

Town Green, EV Charging, and Housing Updates

The team discussed the progress on various projects. They confirmed that they now own the Town Green, which is a significant development. The team also discussed the possibility of installing electric vehicle charging stations, with a focus on Level 3 charging. There was a discussion about the readiness grant and the need to work with Karen Garrity to move forward with it. The team also discussed the tire dump, which is currently inactive due to snow. The Housing project was mentioned, with a meeting scheduled for March 6th. The team also discussed the upcoming Town Meeting, where they plan to present updates on the Planning Commission and ongoing projects.

Planning Commission Membership and Operations

The meeting revolved around the planning commission's membership and operations. James reported that Jennifer resigned due to non-attendance, Steve declined to be a voting member, and Carmela hasn't been participating. However, Hope expressed interest in joining the commission. The group also discussed the need for the Select Board's approval and the possibility of non-voting members. There was a discussion about presenting during the last order of business at the town meeting, with a decision to be made after consulting with Nick. The next meeting was scheduled for March 25th.