

**Town of Grand Isle
Minutes of Planning Commission
June 5, 2018**

Board Members Present:

Shawn Mercy, Chair
David Graham, Vice-Chair
Dwight Bullis
Jeff Parizo
Melissa Boutin

Absent:

Andy Paradee

Guests:

Nathan Robinson	Donald Cota	Diane Cota
William Baron	AnnaMarie DeMars	Rachael Griggs
Sue Lawrence	Michael Shaw	Mitzi Johnson

- A. Meeting is called to order at 7:07 PM by Shawn Mercy, Chair.
- B. Guests: Mitzi Johnson, Ben Joseph under the weather and Dick Mazza intended on joining but may have forgotten – see above for others in attendance.
- C. Round Table Discussion: Opened up with questions from the community-
#1) AnnaMarie DeMars expressed her concern with the most recent MOU with the Ed Weed Fish Hatchery. It has language in it that the town may utilize up to 40 acres specifically to build a high school and now will discontinue in 2019. She questions where the land is, if it's where the solar farm is going in and whether the land can be swapped for another area in town? Mitzi Johnson's response is that the 40 acres may have been a bargaining tool when getting the fish hatchery built. As well, items need to have an end date. She suggests if more land is wanted then having a plan is a good negotiating standpoint. Another item worth noting is dealing with two different departments within the State of Vermont – Fish Hatchery and Parks & Recreation. PC starts with their questions due to nothing else from the community #1) Act 250/9L - wondering if there are any changes being made? Mitzi informs that discussion has occurred but no amendments to it – Agency of Commerce is not interested – still problematic – restrictions on septic capacity – Both David Graham and Shawn Mercy express that designated districts with septic maybe outside the area which limits growth. Mitzi has spoken with Chair of 50 years of Act 250 committee suggesting a provision based on population. However, DEC deals with wastewater which is different than AOC. Jeff Parizo mentions alternative systems for soils that are less than adequate are available but Vermont does not recognize. DEC also has some long-time employed that once retired may bring in new, younger people with fresh ideas – Vermont needs to get away from the soiled based systems. #2) What has been done specifically to benefit the Town of Grand Isle? There is

continuing provisions in the budget for the PILOT – fully funded and has increased along with transportation for town roads and clean water legislation. The Governor wouldn't commit any new money but able to secure funds in a capital bill – Bottle distributor nickels – All Vermonters and others pay on deposit and then not reclaimed is where those funds are from. CHINS (Children in Need of Services) hand in hand with the opiate problem – House passed a substantial property tax reform and income tax changes. #3) Education - Has anyone forecasted what may happen to schools when the State stepped in for consolidation? Mitzi replied by stating the three middle towns took a big step to start a new school district. One pool of money – must decide how to spend (GISU still governing all districts) 1st year no staff changes, 2nd year building/infrastructure changes allowed. Forced conversation on how to consolidate supervisory unions – Vermont has 62 or 63 SUs with 14 counties which is too high. Other states (including New Hampshire) with greater population function with 14 or less supervisory unions. Mitzi has had conversations with others from out of state who are shocked on how resources get used and the cost of administration and special education. #4) Is there a resolution for clean water? Farmers are always being blamed for polluting the lake but nothing on municipalities – fees/fines/accountability. Don Cota stated how New York is allowed to spread manure in February on snow – why is it okay for them and not Vermont? Discussed NY does not have the lakeshore like VT and dumping of sewage does not contain the phosphorus. What closes the beaches is the E. colie and flushed pharmaceuticals which are dangerous for humans. Fact of the matter is that 25 years ago systems were designed to fail when there are huge down pours. To rebuild the kinds of infrastructure today would be astronomical... handing out \$500k to farmers goes much further than to municipalities. That would barely cover a feasibility study. #5) Land acquisition over on Donaldson – anything Mitzi can help with? She is willing to do a letter of recommendation. David Graham gives an update on what has been done and what Grand Isle Recreation would like to do with more land to expand the park – either by donation or lease. There already has been a proposed conversation with the State and there is an all inclusive park on the table right now. However, it goes hand in hand with the town views and visions – win/win for all parties. Bill Baron commends David Graham and Shevonne Travers for going to the State with a plan before asking – did the right thing, right approach. #6) A Class action suit was won where federal money has to help support the opiate problem – David Graham questioned what Vermont is doing – TJ Donovan is on it per Mitzi. Jeff also wondered if there is any cigarette money left and the answer was yes. #7) How is Vermont prepared for the Amber Ash Borer Beetle? Although 5% of Vermont's tree population is ash, Grand Isle has 40%/50%. The Town has a mitigation FEMA plan in progress – would this fall into FEMA? Is there money available? Mitzi's response is that usually when qualifying for FEMA, it's for a certain period of time like a storm – hours, days etc., not years. She has spoken with the Commissioner of Forestry and when speaking with Appropriation may suggest setting aside federal disaster money. For now there is the

recommendation of thinning ash trees, create diversity and buy local wood (beetles don't hitch hike).

Shawn Mercy thanked all for coming this evening.

- D.** Review & Approve Minutes: A motion is made by David Graham to approve the 05/15/18. Jeff Parizo abstained due to his absence. Dwight Bullis seconds. Members vote. All are in favor. Motion carried. Vote 3-0.
- E.** Update from Other Meeting Attendance: Nothing reported.

The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled to be held 7PM on Tuesday, June 19, 2018 at the Town Municipal Office.

A motion is made by Jeff Parizo to adjourn. David Graham seconds the motion. Members vote. All are in favor. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned by Shawn Mercy at 8:45PM.

Respectfully Submitted: Melissa A. Boutin, Planning Commission, Scribe