

1 **GEORGIA PLANNING COMMISSION**

2

3 **MEETING MINUTES**

4 **August 27, 2019**

5

6 *(As Approved)*

7

8 **Board Members Present:** Suzanna Brown, Greg Drew, Lary Martell, David Vincent

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10 **Board Members Absent:** Maurice Fitzgerald, George Bilodeau, Tony Heinlein

11

12 **Staff Present:** Larry Lewack, Planning Coordinator.

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14 **Others Present:** Taylor Newton & Emily Klofft, Northwest Regional Planning Commission; Rob
15 Evans & Staci Pomeroy, VT Agency of Natural Resources; Buddy Meilleur, LCATV videographer

16

17 Suzanna Brown, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

18

19 Suzanna stated that the main agenda and only public appearance this evening is Taylor Newton from
20 Northwest Regional Planning Commission, and his colleagues from VT Agency of Natural
21 Resources. Taylor is here to present and discuss newly proposed Flood Hazard Area Regulations
22 and River Corridor Regulations he has prepared for the town, continuing this topic from last month's
23 meeting. Rob Evans & Staci Pomeroy from VT DEC/ANR were present to provide additional
24 background & technical assistance on the draft regulations.

25

26 Taylor began by providing an overview of the proposed bylaw changes. Focus tonight will be
27 proposed updates of our flood hazard regs, riparian buffers, and river corridor maps. As discussed
28 last month, Taylor said that adopting the State's model bylaw regarding flood hazard zone
29 development, Section 3.6 – Development in the Flood Hazard Zone District of the existing town
30 regulations would be deleted in its entirety. Taylor also stated that Section 5.10 – Riparian Buffer
31 Zones would also be deleted, and replaced with the newly proposed River Corridor regulations.
32 Also included is a new Section 5.11 which regulates Class I and II wetlands, including vernal pools,
33 which is based on Fletcher's bylaw. The potential benefit of implementing these changes to the
34 town is that if our standards align with the state's for river corridors, we qualify for enhanced state &
35 federal flood mitigation funding to restore areas damaged by floods.

36

37 Taylor said that under current law, towns are free to impose stricter requirements than state
38 standards. For example, our current 200' buffer on Deer Brook is wider than the state's required
39 river corridor setback. Lary commented that he's not sure the town should consider or impose
40 stricter standards than the state. This could add additional hurdles and complexity for future
41 applicants and zoning administrators.

42

43 Taylor presented a couple of new town maps prepared by NWRPC, showing proposed river
44 corridors/buffers for all streams in town draining ½ mile or more. Streams draining 2+ square miles
45 are shown with a 100 ft. river corridor setback; streams draining a smaller watershed are shown with
46 a 50 ft. setback. If a stream is perennial (year-round), it's mapped, with additional data available
47 from ANR. Rob Evans added that ANR staff is also available to provide additional consultation if

48 questions arise over seasonal stream flows for specific streams. They also do field surveys to
49 understand specific conditions on the ground, and changes in stream channels over time.

50
51 Rob mentioned that data sets available online at the ANR Natural Resource Atlas website (at:
52 <https://anr.vermont.gov/maps/nr-atlas>) are a good resource to view all kinds of natural resource data
53 in your community. ANR is planning to upload a revised river corridor data set to the Atlas in about
54 6 months. This same info will be available for download to be used in our ArcGIS maps for
55 Georgia. They are also anticipating that FEMA will update flood plain maps at some point in the
56 next few years (date TBD). Rob mentioned that he is the key VT point of contact for questions
57 about the National Flood Insurance Program and federal floodplain regulations.

58
59 Rob explained ANR's three categories of potential impact from flooding in river corridors, which
60 evolved from prior definitions starting about 10 years ago. ANR's current categories are:

- 61
62 • **Stream Corridors:** direct flows within an established/normal stream bed or river basin; have
63 faster, elevated flows during spring runoff and storm events.
- 64 • **Floodways:** flat-ish areas above river banks which are subject to regular/seasonal flooding
65 when spring flood high water overruns the normal river bank. E.g. low-lying farm fields &
66 wetlands adjacent to rivers like the Lamoille.
- 67 • **Special Flood Hazard Areas:** subject to 100-year+ inundation flooding; marked as zone A
68 or zone AE on NFIP floodplain maps.

69 Rob suggested we adopt this terminology in framing the town's definitions.

70
71 Taylor, Rob and Staci did a detailed walk-through of Taylor's draft of proposed rewrites of our
72 bylaws for building standards in river corridors. These are primarily driven by FEMA and ANR
73 standards, and National Flood Insurance Program guidelines. They reviewed proposed exceptions to
74 allow infill development close to river banks in 'flood shadow' zones; these are likely more
75 appropriate to downtowns than to rural towns like Georgia. Greg asked how many structures in
76 town would be affected by changing our regs. Taylor said he will research & provide that data.

77
78 Lary and Suzanna expressed concern about the overlap of these regulations with stormwater
79 management rules and best practices. Taylor said this is another topic, regulated in different
80 sections. They are not the experts on that topic & suggested we come back to that another time.

81
82 Next steps: Taylor will return to the Sept. 24th meeting of the PC with additional edits and maps, as
83 well as promised research on buildings affected. He will also go over potential impacts of changes
84 to river corridors for our stormwater regulations. Taylor, Rob & Staci left the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

85
86 The commission reviewed the minutes from the July 23, 2019 meeting. Greg suggested a minor
87 change to lines 133, clarifying the intention to "... keep temporary construction site disturbance
88 outside of buffer/setbacks." Greg Drew then made a motion to accept the minutes of July 23, 2019,
89 as amended, seconded by David Vincent. The motion carried (Lary Martel abstained, as he did not
90 participate in that meeting).

91
92 Next, the Commission took up a request from attorney David Burke, representing applicant Kathy
93 Rabtoy, regarding the prior Final Plat approval for a 4-lot minor subdivision, PC-01-19. They are
94 requesting a 90-day extension to the 180 day filing deadline to file the mylar for that Final Plat.

95 Discussion followed about whether the PC would set a precedent by granting an extension; we
96 agreed this would not. We also discussed whether the applicant really needed 90 more days to file
97 the final plat. We agreed that 30 days should be sufficient. Greg Drew moved to approve the
98 applicant's request for a 30-day extension, seconded by David Vincent. Approved unanimously.
99

100 Motion made to close the meeting at 9:37 p.m. made by Lary Martel, seconded by Greg Drew. The
101 ayes were unanimous, the motion carried. The meeting was closed.
102

103 Selectboard Concerns: None.
104

105 Respectfully submitted,
106 Larry Lewack, Acting Secretary & PC Coordinator