

**Mount Holly Planning Commission**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**2008 May 19**  
**7:30 pm**  
**Mount Holly Town Office**

**Commissioners present:** Peter Smith, Annette Lynch, Steve Howard, Greg Decker,  
Dennis Deiters

**Call to order:** 7:30 pm

**1. Approval** of prior meeting minutes tabled to next meeting.

**Old Business**

**2. Flood hazard regulations A public hearing** will be held on June 5<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. for adoption of updated Mount Holly Flood Hazard Regulations. The Regulations have been revised to comply with new Federal requirements. Mount Holly must revise its Flood Hazard Regulations to remain in the national flood insurance program. The Town must be in the insurance program, so that Town residents can continue to purchase flood insurance. Drafts of the new Flood Hazard maps have been released and the one for Mount Holly, compiled by the Rutland Regional Planning Commission, is available for inspection in the Town Office. The map shows changes in the Town's flood plains. Town residents affected by the newly defined flood plains have been notified by the Town. Copies of the maps and proposed Mount Holly Flood Hazard Regulations are available for inspection in the Town Office. The draft Flood Hazard Regulations, updated to meet Federal requirements, require the Town to appoint an Administrative Officer to perform administrative duties required by the Regulations. The role of this position and its legal basis, as well as its impact on the current revision of the subdivision regulations, will be explored. The draft Flood Hazard Regulations, up-dated to meet Federal requirements, require the Town to appoint further by members of the Planning Commission. Additional information will be sought from the Rutland Regional Planning Commission and neighboring towns. Members of the Planning Commission will begin the first draft of the subdivision regulation update at the next meeting of the Working Group.

**3. Ecological or Natural Features Study of Mount Holly** began with a public meeting at the school on April 28 with a repeat exhibit in the Town Office Saturday, May 3. Peter Smith, chair of the Planning Commission, reported that the Commission obtained a state grant to identify natural features in Mount Holly that are or contribute to important wildlife habitat. The purpose is to inform Mount Holly residents (especially those new to the community) about (1) the nature of the valuable resources on their properties and (2) the resources available to assist in habitat management. One resource is the state program known as "Current Use" and another is the U.S. Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program. Both programs assist landowners with the costs of resource management programs. Arrowwood Environmental presented the results of the first phase of the study - particularly the remote sensing maps of Mount Holly's natural features derived from aerial photos and other maps and data. The on-the-ground or second phase of the study

was explained. A review of the presentation was available in the Town Office on Saturday morning May 3. Town land owners present at the meetings signed up to have the biologists and ecologists go on their lands to verify and document the natural features identified on the remote sensing maps. Similar permission has been sought by the Planning Commission from 27 owners of properties (ranging from 17 to over 400 acres) that appear on the maps to be sites of significant habitats. As the remote sensing maps show 28 sites of possible vernal or seasonal pools and as these are identifiable in the spring, Arrowwood Environmental planned to start its on-the-ground phase with these pools. A workshop on identifying vernal pools was held on Saturday May 10; attended by 5 hardy town resident land owners. (See the article on vernal pools in this issue of the Chit Chat.)

**4. George D. Aiken Resource and Development Council** subject was tabled for the next Planning Commission meeting.

**5. Affordable Housing:** Members of the Affordable Housing Task Force took the opportunity to meet with Polly Nichol director of the Housing Division of the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (source of funds for affordable housing and conservation) at the Mount Holly Elementary School on May 8. School staff presented data on the needs of many families who can no longer afford housing in Mount Holly and who leave the Town. They also discussed the plight of students whose families can only afford substandard housing in the Town. Members of the Task Force noted the irony of a school with low enrollment losing students. The Task Force presented the case for the development of school related housing on a site with good septic conditions that is some distance from the school and from Belmont village. A potential site was shown to Polly Nichol, who informed the Task Force the following week that the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) support such a development. The Task Force needs to clarify details with the landowner and secure the interest of an affordable housing developer, before calling a meeting with Task Force and consulting with the Select Board about applying for a feasibility grant from VHCB. The Task Force has negotiated to extend its current state planning grant to develop plans for rental units in Belmont – units suitable for seniors, single renters, and families.

**6. Old Maps/Ancient Roads:** no new information to report.

**7. GIS mapping workshops,** conducted by Steve Schild of the Rutland Regional Planning Commission, held on April 24 and May 15 for members of the Planning Commission, Listers, Town Clerk, Select Board, and Mount Holly Conservation Trust was much appreciated by attendees. The Mount Holly parcel map is currently being translated into GIS format, which will provide better and more efficient services to landowners. The workshops were funded with a Municipal Education Grant.

### **New Business**

**8. Planning Commission Chair position:** Peter Smith tendered his resignation as Chair of the Mount Holly Planning Commission. He will stay on as a member. His service and leadership as Chair is enormously appreciated, especially by those who know the amount of personal time and commitment to the community he brought to this position. Thank you, Peter. By unanimous vote, Steve Howard was elected and graciously agreed to become the Chair of the Mount Holly Planning Commission. Thank you, Steve.

**9. Building Registration Forms:** There were 3 new forms to review and sign. Franklin Bickford - 1614 Route 155, new house; Larry and Julie Pitts - 682 Russellville Road, new garage; Nancy Lamauro - 2611Route 155, new 2 car garage.

**Information Items**

10. Forest Legacy Program RRPC
11. APA Zoning Practice Smart Practice brochure
12. Shrewsbury Draft Zoning Regulations
13. APA membership application
14. Putney Press notice
15. Kelly Utilities Wetland project #2008-038

**Other Business**

**Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn, carried, meeting adjourned 9:05pm

Respectfully Submitted

Dennis Deiters