

GRANVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION GOALS – August 1, 2016

The Granville Planning Commission requests your input regarding our intention to amend our Town Plan at this time, prior to its required re-adoption in 2019.

Town Plans are documents that address all aspects of what a town would like to see happen to it over the Plan's five-year lifespan. A Town Plan *per se* is not regulatory, but meant to guide possible subsequent regulations. A Town Plan is also meant to represent residents' choices for Granville's future in some state government proceedings, such as Act 250 Land Use and Development Act; and Title 30, Section 248, which requires companies to obtain approval from the Public Service Board for construction of *commercial* renewable energy generation facilities.

Regarding Act 250 proceedings, though a Plan isn't regulatory, its effectiveness can vary depending on which of two types of language it uses. A town plan using specific, directive language - for example, "gas stations shall be prohibited from flood plains," rather than terms such as "should" or "would be encouraged" - can require conformance by proposed development overseen by Act 250.

Our current Town Plan could be strengthened by amending it to more consistently use specific, directive language.

Regarding Title 30, Section 248, Vermont's intention to switch to 90% renewable energy by 2050 has resulted in a tidal wave of construction of large-scale commercial solar and wind facilities all over the state. This has caused Vermonters to demand revision of siting standards for such projects that would put a stop to energy lobbyists and legislators promoting corporations over people, water, ridgelines, valleys, and the creatures who inhabit our beautiful state.

Act 174 – effective July 1, 2016, titled "An act relating to improving the siting of energy projects" – gives towns more say in the Public Service Board (Section 248) process that regulates *commercial* renewable energy projects. This will foster energy development that respects our communities and protects our environment. The new statute directs municipal and regional planning commissions to include in their plans a section on renewable energy development and siting. While our current Plan does have a renewable energy section, the new statute also prescribes a new certification process through the Department of Public Service that is required to qualify a plan for "substantial deference." Substantial deference, it states, "means that a land conservation measure or specific policy shall be applied in accordance with its terms unless there is a clear and convincing demonstration that other factors affecting the general good of the state outweigh the application of the measure or policy." Specific requirements for certification will be issued by November 1 of this year.

Our current Town Plan will need amending to meet the new certification requirements.

Please let us know your opinion of our intention to amend Granville's Town Plan relative to the two matters outlined above. You may respond by email to Judy Wood, PC Chair: woodja@myfairpoint.net - or by snail mail to: Granville Town Office, Planning Commission, 4157 VT Rte. 100, Granville, VT, 05747.

Granville Planning Commission
Mary Falcon
Cheryl Sargeant
Judy Wood