

Planning Commission Annual report for 2021

Members:

Jock Gill, Chair
Bruce Maclean
Anna Rubin
Marylyn Magnus
Adam Dobson

Tyler LaFontaine - alternate

The Commission drafted and submitted a proposed noise ordinance. Rejected by the Select Board. The draft has been deemed useful by the DRB and a resident seeking a variance. Perhaps this ordinance should be revisited.

The Commission also discussed the situation with dairy farming and its future in Peacham. A major issue with no obvious answers, as the forces driving change are external to Peacham and Vermont. We expect that, given health issues, age and external economic pressure, there will be no functioning dairy farms in Peacham by 2030. This leads to the question of the fate of fields presently kept open by dairy farmers? How will these fields change and what will be the impact on the look and feel of Peacham?

Also considered were the challenge of affordable housing in Peacham. Would there be any support for cluster housing designed to keep as many acres as possible open for other uses?

Lastly, the Commission is considering the value of promoting an all electric Peacham, as envisioned by Rewiring America and seconded by General Motors. To this end, the Commission supports the work of the Energy Committee to establish the first Community Solar Array in Peacham. It should be noted that ground mounted solar arrays are supported by the Ag Department as the arrays can be removed in short order and the site restored to ag use.

The Commission would recommend an annual description of the Commission's purpose and how it works. This to be presented briefly at Town Meeting. This description, including strategies for effective enforcement, should be drafted with input from members of the selectboard to ensure alignment for the committee's work in the coming year. In essence, what does the town want from its Planning Commission?

Until issues of purpose and enforcement can be clarified, the Commission has suspend meetings.