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Development Review Board/Planning Commission

Meeting minutes
July 10, 2025

Present: DRB/PC Chair Jamie Dayton, Dennis Mueller, Abby Matson, DRB/PC Secretary Catherine Hays, Zoning Administrator David Martini
Danelle Birong, Community Planner at Addison County Regional Planning Commission

DRB meeting.
The DRB had no business to discuss.

Planning Commission meeting.
Jamie called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.
The commission took up discussion of the draft future land use map (FLU). Danelle explained that we are focusing on the use of the land. Dennis had some questions on the map, specifically the 500 ft. buffer that was added around Dead Creek. He said this was not indicated in the methodology document; he believes it sends the wrong message. There was a short discussion of the purpose of the buffer. According to Act 181 it would be considered an area to handle sustained growth. Danelle said the mapper used her discretion in creating this buffer. The ACRPC is putting all maps together next week. Then we will be doing public outreach. Once the maps are final, they will be sent to the State. There was also a brief discussion of obtaining a downtown designation for Panton Center. There are benefits associated with having the designation.

Catherine said she was fine with removing the buffer. Others on the Commission agreed. We want to protect the Dead Creek area and don't want to bring attention to it.

Dennis asked about the difference between the village center and village area. Danelle explained that the 'center' is the historical center. The 'area' is around that and can go out one-quarter mile from the center. Zoning still decides what happens in each parcel. This led to a brief discussion of obtaining a 'downtown designation' which Panton has not done. There are benefits associated with this designation.

Jamie made a motion to accept the draft FLU with the change to the buffer around Dead Creek. Abby seconded. The motion passed.

Danelle commented on some grant money that was available to support the boat launch with phosphorus reduction planned. However, the reduction was not enough to approve the grant. She said there is another grant opportunity available.

The commission then took up discussion of Section 315, which outlines enforcement procedures for the zoning administrator. Currently, there are no enforcement guidelines. Any penalties for zoning violations are under the jurisdiction of the Selectboard. However, the Selectboard has declined to enforce any actions for violations.

Dennis pointed out that there were several places in the document where 'Zoning Administrator' was still being used. These need to be changed to 'Administrative Officer'. There was some discussion of how violations were addressed in the past. Violations are not addressed by the Zoning Administrator, but by the Selectboard. The Selectboard has not been willing to enforce fines for violations in the past. In spite of there being very few examples, the current situation is less than ideal. David said the Selectboard could file with environmental court. This new guideline requires the person who was fined to come forward to the DRB and then environmental court if the violation is not corrected. Dennis expressed discomfort with this procedure since violations are only dealt with if someone complains. Catherine commented that this is based on what other towns around us have done. Jamie said there should be consequences and the town shouldn't have to go after a violation using town funds. Finally Dennis said he had no problem with creating the regulation but is still uncomfortable that someone must complain to make the issue known. There were no further comments. Catherine made a motion to accept the enforcement guidelines under Section 315, with changes as mentioned above. Abby seconded. The motion passed. The language must now be presented to the Selectboard; they have the final say.

The agenda listed discussion of Article VIII, changes to the noise ordinance. Jamie suggested we wait to move this forward until we know the outcome of Section 315. David commented that he was not involved in drafting this language. There has been one situation that has been ongoing, but he has not been able to witness the violation. Due to neighbors' complaints the state is now involved and has determined they are not in compliance with the Lakeshore Protection Act. Jamie wants to keep the ordinance simple; Dennis agrees. All agreed we should pause on this for now to see if it can be covered by Section 315.

On Jamie's invitation, Dennis then made a motion to adjourn; Catherine seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Oliver
Assistant Clerk