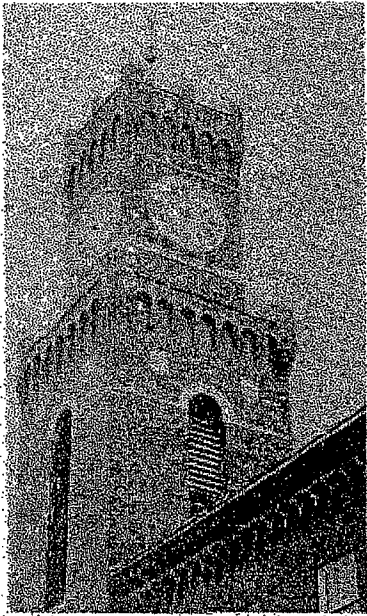


ROCKINGHAM



TOWN PLAN

Hearing Before the Rockingham

Planning Commission - January 31, 2001

Submitted to the Selectboard - February 1, 2001

Copy to the Town Clerk - February 1, 2001

Hearings Before the Selectboard - March 8, 2001

March 20, 2001

Adopted by the Selectboard and

Effective - March 20, 2001

Approved by Windham Regional Commission - *Aug. 28, 2001*

the maintenance of these same facilities can be expensive, particularly during the winter months. Also, the weather during the winter often limits the use of these facilities.

The Town is not a major influence in energy issues but there are instances wherein the municipality can save energy on its own including building maintenance, location of new facilities, and vehicles (highway and school).

Older homes are often less efficient than newer well-insulated ones. In many instances Victorian era homes which have been divided into apartments have ceased heating the entire building with a basement furnace. Landlords have installed individual heating units and the tenant pays for the heat. Electricity is picked as the least costly to install, but is often the most expensive for the tenant to utilize. Another popular alternative is the propane heater. While providing adequate heat, it is often centrally located within an apartment and the heat is not dispersed to all the habitable rooms. Ensuring that these older buildings are energy efficient could save both dollars and energy. Apartment buildings and units which have not undergone an energy audit should be encouraged to do so. This should result in installation of insulation, efficient heating units, tightening of windows and installation of storm windows if units are found deficient. However, there may be trade-offs between achieving maximum energy efficiency and maintaining the historic and aesthetic qualities of these older home. Wherever possible, energy-efficient efforts should be compatible with the historic qualities of the house or apartment.

The hydroelectric plant in Bellows Falls is part of the P.G. & E Generating system which operates other stations along the Connecticut River including locations in Vernon and Wilder, Vermont. The Bellows Falls plant is fed by the canal which divides the "mainland" Bellows Falls from the so-called "Island" which is the older industrial area in the village. This canal was built in the late 1700's to circumvent the Great Falls and allow boats to navigate the length of the river. It was converted into the sluiceway for the hydroelectric system during construction of the dam and plant in the 1920's. The hydro plant, dam and major transmission lines were all owned by New England Power until deregulation in the mid-1990's required separate ownership of the power producing facilities from the transmission lines.

A second small-scale hydroelectric facility is located on the Williams River in Brockways Mills. This facility, originally built in the 1980's, operated a short period of time. The facility was partially dismantled, and most of the electric generating equipment removed. The dam and impoundment remain, and the facility has retained its license to produce power from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Recently, the facility has come under new ownership, with plans to restore power production capability.

One of the unique issues facing Rockingham and future development in the downtown area is the location of the electric substation on Bridge Street. In addition, major transmission lines run in both directions from the substation creating problems with future development and improvements to existing structures. The relocation of the substation has been considered for many years. In 2000, with the renovations to the Exner Block, the transmission lines running from the substation along

the canal to the rear of the Exner Block became an impediment in completing the rehabilitation of the building. The close proximity of the lines to the building and VOSHA work rules required a temporary relocation of the lines at a higher height and further from the building. This is a temporary measure for this particular building, but the community has come to realize the very real limitations which may result from the current placement of the substation and its transmission lines.

GOALS

1. Encourage efficient, safe and renewable energy sources for all public and private buildings and transportation.
2. Encourage patterns of land use and development that use energy most efficiently.

POLICIES

1. Encourage energy conservation including energy used for transportation, for heating, and electrical energy used for running machinery and appliances.
2. Encourage energy sources and technologies which utilize renewable resources including solar, wood and wind.
3. Development should orient structures to take advantage of southern exposure, natural light, and solar gain. Building siting should consider shelter from wind and use of landscaping as a wind buffer and for summer shading.
4. Promote energy efficiency in the design, construction, and rehabilitation and retrofitting of buildings, layout of building lots, and location of roads.
5. Encourage non-motorized vehicles and pedestrian traffic through the expansion of bicycle paths and sidewalks.
6. Promote energy awareness and education.

ACTION STEPS

The Action Steps immediately following are a high priority, and shall be completed within the time frame this Town Plan is in effect.

1. The Town will support the development of a multi-modal facility on the Island to include continued passenger and freight rail service, bus service, vehicular parking, and bicycle facilities. The Selectboard, Planning Commission and Development Office will work together with interested stakeholders to seek development grants, planning support, and participation by transportation agencies and companies.