

**NVDA Town Plan Review Committee Hearing Minutes
Regional Approval of Granby and Guildhall Town Plans
Monday, December 2, 2024
Guildhall Town Clerk's Office, 13 Courthouse Drive, Guildhall**

From Town Plan Review Committee: Cynthia Stuart, Concord; Paul Brouha, Sutton (via Zoom)
NVDA Staff: Alison Low

Representing Granby: Sonia Peters, Planning Commission; Representing Guildhall: George Blakeslee, Town Clerk; Gary Brown, Selectboard Chair; John Orłowski, Selectboard and Planning Commission; Nathaniel Brown, Planning Commission; Dennis Bacon, Planning Commission
Prior to the opening of the hearing, the committee appointed Cynthia to act as Chair, Alison to act as scribe. The hearing opened at 4:47 p.m.

Alison explained the purpose of regional approval of local plans as per 24 V.S.A. §4350. She mentioned that the staff reviews found that all the required elements were present and that the plans were deemed consistent with the State planning goals.

Granby was the first focus of discussion. Sonia explained that the plan was a major update, and that changes were made to bring the plan into compliance with changes to statute. Hot button topics were housing, recreation, and short-term rentals. Originally the planning commission was going to recommend regulations on STRs, but they ultimately dropped that recommendation from the plan, as the public support was not there. There was a community survey that was widely distributed, and they received about 40 responses. The survey results were not appended to the plan distributed to the regional approval committee, but the results can be made available with the plan. The Town is getting its own web site, and the plan will be available from there as well.

Questions included the widespread enrollment in current use – about 80% of the land base. Is there coordination with the county forester? Sonia explained that the land in question is one owner – Landvest. There was a question about the Paul Stream road being gated, which represented a lost opportunity for recreation, such as gravel bike rides. The road has never been maintained by the Town, but perhaps there is an opportunity with the private landowner to allow for some forms of recreation. There were some survey respondents who noted this, and there is interest in expanding Kingdom Trails and recreation uses at Cow Mountain Pond. The town is seeing more gravel bikers, and there is an opportunity to provide accommodation to them, possibly at the Granby Schoolhouse, which is owned by the Town. There was some resistance to this idea in Town, but it could possibly generate revenue.

Another question pertained to the tax base, which includes about 12 miles of town roads. How many tuitioned students are there? Sonia replied that at this point, it's down to zero, since the only family with school-age children have moved out. The Town is pursuing grants to maintain roads (e.g. Better Roads, Grants-in-Aid)

What does the Granby Planning Commission want to achieve? For starters, they don't want their plan to sit on a shelf. They intend to pursue a Municipal Planning Grant to update their zoning, noting that there is a change in the structure and leadership of the town, and she feels confident of support.

Paul made a motion to recommend regional approval of the Granby Plan by the full board of NVDA on December 12th. Cynthia seconded. The motion passed.

Next up was Guildhall. George Blakeslee noted that the plan has been updated to meet new statutory requirements and included new sections. It also was written with new expectations of completely overhauling the zoning bylaws (which could not be done when the plan was expired). They expect to pursue grant funding to do this, when the Municipal Planning Grants are announced.

It was noted that there is active development along Route 102, about 3 or 4 houses over the past 4 or five years. However, more development is imminent because a landowner plans to subdivide. There is a desire to keep development to the roadways and preserve the outlying back areas for recreation use. The zoning bylaws don't currently support this, so it depends on timing.

It was noted that implementation, particularly the revision of the zoning bylaws, is a shared responsibility, since the Planning Commission will need buy-in from the Selectboard.

It was noted that the Town had already been able to access some grants – they were recently awarded \$122,000 from the Municipal Energy Resilience Program to make improvements to the Town Clerk's office.

It was noted by the committee that the plan was extremely well written and thoughtful.

Paul made a motion to recommend regional approval of the Guildhall Plan by the full board of NVDA on December 12th. Cynthia seconded. The motion passed.

The public hearing was closed at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Low