

Notice of Public Hearing

What: Public hearing by the Calais Planning Commission to answer questions and hear comments regarding the draft amendments to the “Calais Town Plan.”

Where: Town Office, 3120 Pekin Brook Rd., East Calais

When: 7 p.m., Tuesday, February 17, 2015

You may view the draft amendments at <http://www.calaisvermont.gov> under “Town Plan Draft 2014.” If you have questions before the meeting please contact Jack Russell at 229-1908. These changes impact all town citizens.

At the public hearing, our agenda is to hear your comments and answer questions on the draft Town Plan articles (please review before coming).

The Town Plan is a five-year strategic document that outlines a long term vision for Calais. Articles are generally grouped into two areas of emphasis – land use and development (zoning) and municipal services. Each article provides an overview of the current situation, issues, goals, and action steps.



Town of Calais Planning Commission
Report on the Proposed Town Plan Update - 2014
January 13, 2015

The Calais Planning Commission is proposing amendments to the 2009 Calais Town Plan. This report is prepared per the requirements of 24 VSA 4384.

The proposed amendments embodied in the 2014 Calais Town Plan draft reflect the aspirations of the town as defined in its *Vision Statement*. The 2014 Town Plan draft focuses on goals considered realistically obtainable in the next five years. The primary purpose of the plan is to provide direction in the town's planning and legislative decision making processes. A second purpose is to provide as complete a description of existing services, conditions and aspirations as practicable. It is intended to promote local interest and encourage general civic engagement.

Amendments to the Calais Town Plan which cite the Planning Commission or Selectboard as the Responsible Party with regard planning and legislative decision making Goals are summarized as follows:

1. Vision Statement

The 2014 *Vision Statement* is, by in large, consistent with the Vision Statement which prefaced the 2009 Calais Town Plan. Changes from the earlier statement include an expressed interest in increasing energy efficiency to 60% renewable from 25%. Also, no target for local food production is called out in the 2014 statement. The Vision Statement also contains the first reference to Smart Growth principles. (Note that there are no "goals" listed in the Vision statement. Neither the Planning Commission nor Selectboard are Responsible Parties with regard to implementation.)

2. Land Use

There are no proposed changes to the Zoning Districts in the town cited in this section. (The Municipal Services section (10) does ask that an expansion of the East Calais Village Zoning District be considered in conjunction with an increase in reservoir capacity for the water district that serves the East Calais Village.)

There are references to the Smart Growth principles of density averaging and the transfer of development rights in exchange for protection of sensitive habitat.

3. Housing

The 2009 Town Plan recognized to need for Calais to provide its "fair share" of housing as set forth in the 2007 CVRPC Build-out Analysis. The 2014 amendment to the Town Plan asks the Calais Planning Commission to review the Calais Zoning and Subdivision Regulations with regard to amended language that more readily permits a greater variety of multi-family dwelling types such as PUDs, apartments, duplexes and other clustered housing options. This is consistent with Smart Growth principles which would allow for denser development in certain areas in exchange for environmental protection.

4. Economic Development

The 2014 amendment to the Town Plan asks the Calais Planning Commission to review the Calais Zoning and Subdivision Regulations with regard to amended language that more readily permits a greater variety of small business uses throughout the town, particularly mixed use developments.

5. Agriculture

The 2014 amendment to the Town Plan asks that the Planning Commission and Selectboard address the waste management issue of composting of food and agricultural waste including the review of Zoning Regulations regarding composting.

The Zoning Regulations should also be reviewed with regard to mixed -use developments that allows/permits farm stands and the on-site processing and sales of agricultural products. Language regarding protecting good agricultural soils is essentially unchanged from the 2009 Town Plan, but reference is made to soils mapping.

6. Flood Resilience

This is a new Town Plan section and its inclusion is required by state statute. Proposed is the establishment of a new River Corridor Zoning overlay district. This new overlay would amount to a "no-build" zone along specific streams and brooks in Calais. The economic implication is regarded as negligible; the majority of this new overlay is already within the current Flood Hazard Overlay District and development restrictions already apply.

7. Natural Resources

The 2014 Natural Resources section builds on the Natural Resources section in the 2009 Town Plan. The Planning Commission and Selectboard are asked to consider new overlay districts which protect significant natural resources. Meaningful discussion of these new overlay districts waits for a "natural resource inventory" to be mapped

out and accepted by the town. Protection may include requiring Conditional use review for development within established significant natural resources overlay map. Because the extent of these overlays is unknown, the general impact cannot be determined. Inventoried natural resources may include deer wintering habitat, significant natural communities, rare, threatened and endangered species, primary agricultural soils, mast stands, "natural areas", all wetlands and vernal pools, turtle and terrestrial amphibian habitat, and grassland birds.

The 2014 amendment to the town plan asks that the Planning Commission consider the Zoning Regulations with regard to stream crossings, vegetative buffers along lakes and streams, wetland buffers, and storm water management.

The 2014 amendment to the town plan asks that gravel resources suitable for the maintenance of our roads be identified for the purpose of creating "gravel overlay districts" wherein all other development is limited. The rationale for this being that if and when the time comes to make use of a gravel resource, there will be fewer near-by neighbors to challenge a permit application for extraction. The impact of such an overlay district cannot be determined until the gravel resources have been identified. The issue is made more complex by an accompanying request that the town protect "important glacial features".

Density bonuses for development should be considered if a development proposal protects terrestrial amphibian habitat and vernal pools.

The 2014 amendment to the town plan includes some mapping of natural resources. For the most part, map data has been developed by Vt ANR. Maps include deer wintering areas, habitat blocks, rare/threatened/endangered species, fluvial erosion hazard areas, wetlands, and connecting habitat.

8. Historic Resources

Changes from 2009: Planning Commission to review standards for Historic Barn reuse in Zoning Regulations, and town's request to the state that it have the right of first refusal for the "Kent Tavern" in the event that it is offered for sale by the state.

9. Municipal Facilities

No changes

10. Municipal Services

Calais currently has two municipal water systems. Language regarding the protection of these water sources is essentially unchanged from the 2009 Town Plan. Ground water resources are currently being mapped by the state. The 2014 amendment to the town plan asks that protection of any significant ground water resources identified in this mapping be considered.

The 2014 amendment to the town plan asks that the Zoning Regulations consider language that directs the location of utility poles and their R.O.W.s with regard to established development buffers.

The 2014 amendment to the town plan asks that the Zoning Regulations consider language that directs the cutting of trees in town road R.O.W.s to conform with recently adopted Calais Road and Bridge Standards.

The 2014 amendment to the town plan asks that the town consider expanding the East Calais Village District boundaries and evaluate possible increased reservoir capacity for the water district that serves the village for the purpose of increasing the development potential in the East Calais Village district.

11. Energy

The 2014 amendment to the town plan asks that the town consider its options with regard to establishing Park and Ride lots for commuters. Also, the town is asked to map those sites suitable for large photovoltaic (PV) arrays. Review Zoning Regulations with regard to all new PV installations.

12. Transportation

No change

13. Education

No change

14. Recreation

No change

The 2009 Town Plan section Regional Issues has been deleted. Ongoing relationships with the CVRPC, East Montpelier Volunteer Fire and Rescue, Woodbury Fire and Rescue, CVSWMD, and Washington Central Supervisory Union continue per the 2009 Town Plan. References to Calais' relationship with these regional entities are found in relevant 2014 Town Plan sections. Note that "Regional Issues" is no longer mandated by the state as a required Town Plan section.