

6/16/2020

Proposed resolution in response to COVID-19

The Town of Thetford and the Thetford Planning Commission are committed to sharing information and providing leadership throughout the evolving Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Decisions are guided by three priorities: slowing the transmission of the virus within our community, continuing municipal services, and ensuring the safety and health of all municipal employees and Thetford residents.

RESOLUTION

Thetford Planning Commission COVID-19 Response

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, Governor Phil Scott declared a State of Emergency in Vermont because of the novel coronavirus known as COVID19 and issued an Executive Order under 20 V.S.A. Chapter 1, prohibiting, among other steps, limiting gatherings of people; issuing a Stay Home, Stay Safe Order; and closing schools for in-person instruction through the rest of the school year; and

WHEREAS, it is not known how long emergency measures will remain in place; and

WHEREAS, the duties of the Thetford Planning Commission are set forth in Title 24, Section 4325 of the laws of the State of Vermont and include preparing and amending the Town Plan, zoning bylaws, and subdivision regulations, and undertaking studies and making recommendations on matters of land development; and

WHEREAS, the Vermont Planning and Development Act (4 V.S.A. § 4384) includes specific notice and meeting requirements relating to planning commission duties, necessitating the continuation of special and regularly scheduled meetings of the Thetford Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, transparency is an essential element of open and democratic government. In Vermont, the primary means of providing transparency are the State's open meeting law, 1 V.S.A. §§ 310-314, and the public records law, 1 V.S.A. §§ 315-320; and

WHEREAS, on March 30, 2020 Governor Scott signed into law Act 92 (H.681) which sets forth new Open Meeting Law procedures in response to COVID-19 and will be effective throughout the duration of the Governor's declared state of emergency; and

WHEREAS, the stated intent of Act 92 is to encourage public bodies to meet electronically while also providing the public with electronic access to meetings in lieu of a designated physical location; and

WHEREAS, Act 92 requires the use of technology that permits public attendance at all meetings through electronic or other means include by telephone, if feasible; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Thetford Planning Commission will complete its duties by meeting electronically in lieu of a designated physical location, with public access through electronic or other means, for the following purposes:

- Preparing, amending and holding hearings for the Town Plan, zoning bylaws, and subdivision regulations, including Town meeting and notice requirements pursuant to the Vermont Planning and Development Act (4 V.S.A. § 4384); and
- Undertaking studies and making recommendations on matters of land development; and
- Monitoring the Governor’s declared state of emergency, the requirements of the Vermont open meeting law, and the Thetford Planning Commission’s commitment to open and transparent meetings through virtual and physical meeting locations to the extent required by law.

Adopted this ____ day of June 2020 by the Thetford Planning Commission.

David C. Forbes, Chair