

PLANNING COMMISSION

PRELIMINARY MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

February 21, 2017

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Alan Couch, Chair
Terry Carter

Alan Isaacson
Logan Nicoll

Norm Vanasse

STAFF PRESENT:

Rose Goings

OTHERS PRESENT:

Adam Sayres - LPC-TV Lisha Klaiber, Recorder

1. CALL TO ORDER

A. Alan Couch opened the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL BY RECORDING SECRETARY

A. All Planning Commission members present.

3. APPROVE MINUTES

A. The minutes to be approved are from the meeting of January 17, 2017.

B. Terry Carter pointed out the clarifications below.

i. HHH: Terry Carter asked if after the ten year period of a set rate of 11 cents a kilowatt hour, how the rate is determined.

ii. Part 6: F: Alan Isaacson asked if our electric company's use of hydro power and solar power already could offset our town's responsibility of achieving the 90% of all our power coming from renewables set by the state of Vermont.

C. **MOTION by Alan Isaacson and seconded by Logan Nicoll to approve the minutes January 17, 2017 as amended. Motion passed unanimously. (Norman Vanasse abstained.)**

4. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

A. There were none.

5. ENERGY PRESENTATION BY JASON RASMUSSEN AND DISCUSSION

- A. Jason Rasmussen presented a slide show that gave the scope of requirements that a town must meet in order to receive Substantial Deference with regard to the new Energy Law, Act 174. The Regional Planning Commission will work with Ludlow to rewrite the Energy Chapter of their Municipal Plan. There will be a lot of decisions to be made and a lot of homework for board members. All Renewable Energy projects are exempt from local zoning regulations and if the town receives the Substantial Deference status, it will have more influence in the process. The Department of Public Service (DPS) issued its new standards in November 2016. Jason Rasmussen said that there are 2 deadlines that Ludlow needs to be aware of. Your Municipal Plan will expire and the Regional Planning Commission assistance to Ludlow on this project must be complete by July 2017. The Public Service Board (PSB) will look at town plans. In order to obtain Substantial Deference, the town plan must be stronger. The Regional Planning Commission received funds to assist 3 towns and Ludlow is one. The town Energy plan must be locally adopted and regionally approved according to 24 VSA § 4348 a (a) (3) and must be consistent with state energy policies. It must have:
- i. Greenhouse gas reduction goals
 - ii. Renewable energy goals
 - iii. Building efficiency goals
 - iv. Efficiency and renewable energy generation goals
- Jason Rasmussen continued, saying that Regional is working on its own plan and presumably, towns could adopt the Regional Energy Plan. The main state goal is to have 90% of energy be renewable by the year 2050. This includes transportation, thermal (heating) and energy production.
- i. Towns must have a plan that contains an estimated current energy use analysis for transportation, thermal and electricity
 - ii. It must establish targets for thermal and electrical conservation and efficiency, use of renewable energy for transportation, thermal (heating) and electricity and electric generation
 - iii. Towns must evaluate needs for conversion of heating sources and transportation.
- B. Alan Isaacson asked if the 90% is for businesses only.
- C. Jason Rasmussen said no, residential and businesses. He said towns must also make projections of population growth, housing growth and commercial growth.
- D. Alan Isaacson asked if you can get credit for hydropower.
- E. Jason Rasmussen said he did not think so, but would verify. He said that the targets should be for 2025, 2035 and 2050. Thermal targets would include weatherization, heat pumps and biofuels. Transportation goals could include reduction of miles driven and reduction of single occupancy vehicular traffic. The other target goals would be for electricity, conservation and energy generation. He said that currently 3.63% of the regional power is solar.

- F. Alan Isaacson asked if the 2 new projects in Ludlow are included. Jason Rasmussen said no. These are assumptions: Residential Wind towers at 30 meters produce 1-5 KW, Small Commercial at 50 meters produce up to 1 MW and large Commercial at 70+ meters produce 2MW. For solar projects: Residential produce 4 KW, Small Commercial, up to 40 square feet, produce 20 KW, Large Commercial up to 40K square feet about 200 KW and 6 acres of land for about 1 MW. The Enhanced Energy Plan will have pathways and recommended actions to achieve target goals. It will also have a Statement of Policy that includes conservation, transportation, land use and development and siting of renewable energy projects. The plan must also include Maps of potential areas for Solar, wind, hydropower and biomass. Hydropower and Biomass are optional. To do the maps, you will have to review the Land Use Chapter.
- G. Logan Nicoll said that Ludlow has 4 dams that do not produce electricity.
- H. Jason Rasmussen said that the goals have to be realistic. The maps will show known constraints and potential constraints. You will have to list preferred locations and list unsuitable areas. He said that the time line for work with Regional is:
- i. Initial Meeting – February 2017 (tonight)
 - ii. SWCRPC Draft Plan – April to May
 - iii. Municipal Review – June
 - iv. Completion of project – End of July. Ludlow will have the draft for its Energy Chapter, but we probably will not have an approved Regional Plan. Ludlow has 2 options:
 - a) Ludlow can ask Regional to certify that the plan complies with the Regional Plan
 - b) Ludlow can send its plan directly to the State and this may prove more difficult as the state may scrutinize it more deeply.
- I. Alan Isaacson said if we wait, we run up against our March 2018 plan expiration.
- J. Jason Rasmussen said you can adopt your plan before Regional adopts its plan.
- K. Alan Isaacson noted that the plan will be massive.
- L. Jason Rasmussen referred to the handouts that he provided and said that they show what needs to be included in the Enhanced Energy Plan and said it will not shorten Ludlow's town plan. It is a high bar to meet and the Legislature is looking at it again. There is a check list for standards that must be met.
- M. Logan Nicoll asked if Ludlow will be held accountable to provide more renewable energy since our potential sites areas is higher than the rest of the county.
- N. Jason Rasmussen said that the governor is not fond of wind power. We need to look at the ridgelines, transmission lines and access to 3-phase lines. He really does not have an answer to Logan Nicoll's question. Ludlow has higher wind potential than the rest of the region. He said that if there are 10 towns in the region and to obtain 72 MW you need 400+ acres, then it would be 40 acres of solar panels per town.
- O. Alan Isaacson said with the 2 new projects, Ludlow is almost there.
- P. Logan Nicoll said Ludlow has more potential than Cavendish and other towns. Will Ludlow be asked to shoulder more of the load?
- Q. Jason Rasmussen said he does not have an answer. Ludlow has the needed infrastructure. Getting into the new plan will give Ludlow the opportunity to say what it wants and does not want.
- R. Rose Goings said she wonders what the Select Board will say about the new Energy Chapter. They were in favor of the Ranger Solar project.

- S. Alan Isaacson said he thinks that Driver Solar was not accurate in their information about screening and thought they were disingenuous in some of their statements. The screening they showed in the simulations was not what it will be at the beginning of the project. He said that his concern is about thermal and vehicular goals because they are totally out of Ludlow's control. No one around here will be buying a Tesla that only gets 300 miles on a charge and takes hours to recharge. It doesn't make sense.
- T. Terry Carter said that technology has not caught up with the economy.
- U. Alan Isaacson said that battery technology is only growing incrementally and should be growing exponentially.
- V. Jason Rasmussen asked the board if they want to proceed.
- W. Logan Nicoll said he thinks that the Select Board will think that this is essential. Ludlow would like to have more control.
- X. Jason Rasmussen said since Ludlow does have the infrastructure, it may be good to have Substantial Deference.
- Y. Alan Couch said it is an ambitious goal and we need to work toward achieving it.
- Z. Jason Rasmussen said they need to look at the town plan and ridgelines.
- AA. Logan Nicoll asked if building efficiency standards will affect zoning.
- BB. Rose Goings said that for additions, renovations and new construction, we already must have an Energy Certificate before issuing a CO.
- CC. Logan Nicoll said we could encourage south-facing structures.
- DD. Jason Rasmussen said that could be ideas for Land Use and subdivision standards.
- EE. Alan Isaacson asked what the Energy Certificate is.
- FF. Rose Goings said it includes energy efficient windows, doors, insulation and heating and the applicant must submit one before a CO is issued. It is submitted to the lawyer for financing and then to us for recording. It is state law. She asked if we should encourage personal and roof solar arrays. Our target is already close to being met. Will we need to do anymore solar farms?
- GG. Jason Rasmussen said he doesn't know.
- HH. Rose Goings said we can still encourage residential panels.
- II. Terry Carter asked if there are any state incentives for people.
- JJ. Jason Rasmussen said he is not sure of the status of incentives. He said for the next time he comes, he will get better maps, they need to look at ridgelines, they need to think about target goals, and he will find out about hydropower potential and look at biomass. He was not sure why the biomass project in Ludlow didn't happen.
- KK. Alan Isaacson said it was about traffic and transportation. There would be too many additional trucks on Route 100, Route 103 and Pleasant Street. The railroad was discussed but it is unidirectional.
- LL. Logan Nicoll asked if we can get the approximate wind and solar in Ludlow as compared to the rest of the region.
- MM. Terry Carter asked if land is privately owned and people don't want to use it for energy projects, is that taken into consideration.
- NN. Jason Rasmussen said that maps just show the potential sites.
- OO. Alan Isaacson said he would like to see an overlay map with potential solar and wind sites and Ludlow's ridgeline map.
- PP. Jason Rasmussen said he can do that and would get better data.
- QQ. Alan Isaacson asked if Jason Rasmussen would mark up Ludlow's energy chapter.

- RR. Rose Goings said that she has Jason Rasmussen's power point on her email and would send it out to board members.
- SS. Alan Isaacson said he has the potential site maps and would send them out.
- TT. Jason Rasmussen said the board can look at the constraints map.
- UU. Alan Isaacson said that some of the constraints are river corridors. He added that with the 2 projects, Ludlow may be very close to the 90% goal. He added that the maps don't address Thermal or Transportation.
- VV. Alan Couch said the board should review and mark up the entire town plan.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Driver Solar Project

- i. Rose Goings said that Chris Callahan sent the Letter of Appearance to the PSB. The town's main concern is screening and that the timing issues were not good. The Regional Planning Commission is working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and we should get involved in that. The screening issues are completely out of whack and do not make sense.
- ii. Alan Isaacson asked how we can get involved in the MOU.
- iii. Rose Goings said either Chris Callahan or she can call Tom Kennedy.
- iv. Jason Rasmussen said that parts of the regional MOU would include decommissioning and maintenance of landscaping.
- v. Rose Goings said the Select Board would like one of the hearings to be here in Ludlow.
- vi. Alan Isaacson said that the screening that Driver Solar is proposing is not sufficient. Additionally, if the existing house is removed, more screening should be required because the house provides part of their screening plan.
- vii. Logan Nicoll said that the Select Board requested a projection of what the proposed screening will look like on Day #1 of the project, not 5 to 10 years down the road. We understand that we don't have a lot of say in the matter, but we need to stay cordial. Driver Solar knows that they don't need us or our approval.
- viii. Alan Couch asked if they do tear down the house, will they add more panels.
- ix. Alan Isaacson said no, they are maxed to the number of panels they can have.
- x. Logan Nicoll said they can only net meter up to 500 KW to get the residential rate plus solar adder.
- xi. Alan Isaacson advised that this will also cause an increase in Ludlow Electric rates.
- xii. Jason Rasmussen said the applicant asked for an extension until March 6, 2017 and Regional Planning Commission needs to get its MOU to Chris Callahan before that time.
- xiii. Alan Isaacson said he would check with Frank Heald tomorrow to see if he has been involved with the MOU and Tom Kennedy.
- xiv. Logan Nicoll said the Select Board did ask Frank Heald to draft a MOU for Ludlow.
- xv. Jason Rasmussen suggested that someone ask Frank Heald to call Tom Kennedy.

- xvi. Logan Nicoll said that Town Meeting is on March 6th and this project will probably come up for discussion.
- xvii. Jason Rasmussen said that Driver Solar has been good to work with.
- xviii. Logan Nicoll said it was also good that they brought their Aesthetic Engineer to the Select Board meeting.
- B. Next meeting
 - i. Next regular meeting is on March 21, 2017.

7. **ADJOURN**

- A. **MOTION by Logan Nicoll and seconded by Alan Isaacson to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber

Alan Couch, Chairman

Logan Nicoll

Terry Carter

Norman Vanasse

Alan Isaacson