

PLANNING COMMISSION

PRELIMINARY MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

June 20, 2017

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Alan Couch
Terry Carter

Alan Isaacson
Logan Nicoll

Norm Vanasse

STAFF PRESENT:

Rose Goings

OTHERS PRESENT:

Georgia Brehm
Phil Carter
Aaron Galley
Meghann Galley

Julie Nicoll
Beverly Stepp
Torin Tofferi
Linda Tucker

Georgia Wyman
Adam Sayre - LPC-TV
Lisha Klaiber, Recorder

1. CALL TO ORDER

A. Alan Couch opened the meeting at 6:01 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 May 16, 2017

B. **MOTION by Alan Isaacson and seconded by Terry Carter to approve the minutes from May 16, 2017 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.**

4. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

A. There were none.

5. REFINE VISION FOR MUNICIPAL PLAN

A. Alan Couch explained that the Vision Statement is for the municipal plan.

B. Alan Isaacson said it would go at the beginning of the plan and would replace superfluous language currently in the plan.

C. Alan Couch explained that rewriting the municipal plan is a dynamic process and we need to create a document that we can live with.

D. Alan Isaacson said hopefully, we can get the Select Board and Trustees on board with this.

- E. Terry Carter said that in rewriting the town plan, the Planning Commission is starting with the Vision Statement and then will proceed with the Energy Chapter.
- F. Alan Isaacson said that the Planning Commission wanted input from town residents.
- G. Linda Tucker said that part of the Vision statement refers to maintaining population and encourage Economic Development. She asked if the Planning Commission has any plans for these.
- H. Alan Couch said the Planning Commission would like to encourage development and small businesses, such as new retail and small manufacturing. We want to encourage entrepreneurs.
- I. Linda Tucker asked how.
- J. Terry Carter said this board does not have the answers, but this is our vision.
- K. Alan Couch said we want to make zoning regulations that will help accomplish this. We want people to feel welcome in town.
- L. Alan Isaacson asked people if the Vision Statement fits the needs and desires of the town and if it does, we can start working toward its goals.
- M. Norman Vanasse said that young kids want to leave town and Vermont. He said we have tech schools in Springfield and Rutland that will train students for jobs that are needed.
- N. Alan Isaacson said Ludlow is a nice place to live and there are good communication facilities.
- O. Terry Carter said we want to encourage broadband access all over town.
- P. Torin Tofferi asked how the Planning Commission would increase housing.
- Q. Logan Nicoll said that this board has discussed that at length and we know there is not enough affordable housing and it's even hard to find affordable rentals.
- R. Torin Tofferi said his staff can't find affordable housing in Ludlow and that this historic district and regulations restrict people from making more affordable housing.
- S. Logan Nicoll said this vision is our ideas of what we want and we want to know if this is what the residents of Ludlow want. We need public input. We now have a designated Village Center and people there can get tax credits for renovations. We want to build the town plan around this and then work on zoning regulations to further support it. We want to write zoning regulations that support affordable housing. The Select Board is in favor of affordable housing. We want to work with the Windham/ Windsor Trust to create more affordable housing.
- T. Phil Carter said that we have been discussing affordable housing since the 1980s and there is still no one to pay for it. We charged Okemo an impact fee for affordable housing. Going through Windham/Windsor is a good idea.
- U. Terry Carter asked about Black River Overlook.
- V. Rose Goings said that was an Act 250 condition for one of the Okemo developments.
- W. Phil Carter said that housing has been changing since 2008 and the economy has changed.
- X. Terry Carter said that people have come to grieve property values on the mountain because the market value has decrease.
- Y. Logan Nicoll said the Planning Commission works on the town plan first, then the zoning regulations. We will put in something about the Windham/Windsor Trust.
- Z. Alan Couch said that what this board puts into the town plan now, should still be relevant in 10 to 15 years.
- AA. Logan Nicoll said that the state has changed the rules pertaining to town plans. This new one that we are working on will be valid for 8 years. We want ours to make sense in 2025. This is our vision for the early 2020s. We start with a dream and work from there.
- BB. Beverly Stepp said she wants less \$1,000,000 homes built in the woods and we should limit the sizes of buildings. It troubles her that we are filling our woods with mansions.
- CC. Logan Nicoll said that the Planning Commission put Ridgeline Protection in the last revision of the zoning regulations.

- DD. Alan Isaacson said that the Vision and the town plan are not laws. The vision is where we want the town to be in 10 years. We then build the zoning regulations to work toward that vision.
- EE. Phil Carter said that some towns have 20-25 acre parcel limits and asked this board if they had discussed increasing lot size minimums for rural areas.
- FF. Alan Couch asked what 25 year old could afford a 20-25 acre parcel. He said it's a delicate balance.
- GG. Phil Carter said this board needs to write the zoning regulations to define where you want certain things and where you don't. They should define what we want Ludlow to look like. He said that the towns you remember when you are traveling are the ones that are unique. What is Ludlow's brand? Okemo is here and it will bring mansions. Whatever our brand is, it must incorporate Okemo.
- HH. Linda Tucker said she has heard Ludlow referred to as a town for second home owners and that is not what she wants.
- II. Alan Couch said we have to maintain that delicate balance between residents and 2nd home owners.
- JJ. Logan Nicoll said the Planning Commission wrote this vision before the school vote and clearly, the town wants to keep the high school. That will be hard to do. The town plan should include that we want Ludlow to keep the high school in town.
- KK. Norman Vanasse said people got out and voted on that. He said that people like the open spaces in Ludlow and then move here, decreasing the open spaces.
- LL. Alan Couch asked if there were any further comments. There were none.

6. ENERGY CHAPTER

- A. Rose Goings advised that Jason Rasmussen was unable to attend this meeting.
- B. Alan Couch said the board has been discussing this for many months and working with Jason Rasmussen. Jason Rasmussen has been a great help with the new state regulations. It is the board's consensus to promote renewable energy, but not to be overrun with wind turbines and solar panels. The state goal is to have 90% of the energy used by 2050 come from renewable energy sources.
- C. Alan Isaacson said part of the reason for including the Energy Chapter in the town plan that complies with State guidelines is that it gives Ludlow more input at PSB hearings for future commercial projects. The Regional Planning Commission has been helping us with this.
- D. Terry Carter said that the state assigns quotas for renewable energy to towns. Ranger Solar will close to satisfy Ludlow's requirements.
- E. Aaron Galley noted that Ranger Solar would be selling the energy out of state.
- F. Logan Nicoll said that the state law is more concerned with what the amount of energy from renewable sources that is generated in town is and the Ranger Solar project counts to that amount for Ludlow.
- G. Alan Isaacson said that Ludlow does get credit for the power that will be generated by Ranger Solar.
- H. Logan Nicoll said each county has to generate the power, but does not have to use it. Each town is assessed by potential renewable energy areas for wind and solar.
- I. Terry Carter said the new governor is not in favor of wind turbines. She added that Ludlow has a lot of potential solar sites.
- J. Logan Nicoll said we also have peaks for wind turbines. We are close to 3-phase lines and high voltage lines. These sites are on North Hill.
- K. Alan Isaacson said that Ludlow buys its electric from Hydro-Quebec.

- L. Phil Carter asked if private, residential installations count.
- M. Alan Isaacson said no.
- N. Georgia Wyman asked if Ranger Solar goes bankrupt, is Ludlow protected.
- O. Logan Nicoll explained that Ranger's contract will include a provision for an escrow account with monies that will be held until decommissioning in 30 years and that the land will be restored to its original state.
- P. Georgia Wyman asked if Ranger would make yearly contributions into that account.
- Q. Logan Nicoll said that has been taken into consideration and the project is out of Ludlow's hands. He added that the addition of this chapter into the town plan will afford Ludlow the status of "Due Deference" at PSB hearings. If we write the chapter per state guidelines and spell out that we encourage renewable energy projects, we will possibly have a say in where we want them and where we do not want them. At the present time, we can only apply for intervener status and the PSB can override what we want and don't want. This chapter will give us more leeway.
- R. Terry Carter noted that most of the Potential sites are privately owned.
- S. Alan Isaacson, referring to the draft of the chapter, noted that it had not changed much since the board's last meeting. He added that some of the things the board wanted added, had not been added, such as changes to the Preservation district and private solar installations in the village.
- T. Phil Carter Phil Carter asked about private wind turbines that are net metered.
- U. Rose Goings said we (the town) can't stop them.
- V. Logan Nicoll said that the board was not all in favor of giant wind turbines in town and this was spelled out in the Ridgeline Protection section.
- W. Rose Goings said we are against them in the village.
- X. Logan Nicoll said we didn't want commercial projects in the village.
- Y. Alan Isaacson said we only wanted rooftop panels in the Preservation District. He added that we don't have height limits for towers either.
- Z. Rose Goings said they are not in the regulations for wind towers.
- AA. Logan Nicoll said that they should be 35 feet over the next highest structure.
- BB. Georgia Wyman asked about the proposed project at the intersection of Route 100N and Route 103.
- CC. Logan Nicoll advised that it has been cancelled. The company did not notify the abutters and town before the filing date. They were trying to file on last year's regulations.
- DD. Georgia Wyman asked if they can reapply.
- EE. Logan Nicoll said there are new regulations and the rates aren't as good. That is another reason we need to complete this energy chapter, because, at this time, we have no say in these matters. Private landowners can do what they want with their land, even though the neighbors are impacted.
- FF. Georgia Wyman said that project was on Scenic Route 100.
- GG. Terry Carter said that company was putting its projects in brownfields.
- HH. Logan Nicoll said they had compelling pictures of the land.
- II. Georgia Wyman said they were not factual. These projects do not belong on a Scenic byway. She then asked if the Select Board knew that the power generated by the Ranger project was not going to be used in Ludlow.
- JJ. Alan Couch said we did not have say with the PSB, but we are getting tax benefits.
- KK. Rose Goings added that they will also be contributing to the Enterprise Fund.
- LL. Logan Nicoll said they will be selling it to the ISO New England grid and we buy from that grid. They said they'd make an effort to sell within the state.
- MM. Alan Couch said that aesthetically, we are putting in screening requirements.

- NN. Logan Nicoll said the Route 100 project gave us a lot of information. The pictures they showed of the proposed screening were at 20 year growth. We need to require screening as of Day 1 of the project. The Select Board did not have any say at the PSB hearings. He said no matter what the Select Board said, the PSB would have approved the project. The Select Board negotiated with Ranger for tax credits, contributions to the Enterprise Funds and screening. Additionally, they also asked Ranger to start the project back further from the road and Ranger said they would. The Select Board wanted a good working relationship with Ranger.
- OO. Phil Carter noted that other towns have gotten the state's attention.
- PP. Alan Isaacson said that this Energy Chapter is the result of the new state regulations and we have to put certain language into it. We have been getting assistance from the Regional Planning Commission.
- QQ. Phil Carter asked if it will give the town plan more meat.
- RR. Alan Isaacson said yes.
- SS. Terry Carter added that in the Transportation Section, we added language to encourage electric vehicles and add charging stations.
- TT. Alan Isaacson said we also encourage non-fossil fuels for heating.
- UU. Aaron Galley said that people could put in heat pumps. He said that most buildings around town could produce almost as much energy as they use with rooftop solar panels. People could also get rid of oil fired boilers. There are many options. He suggested incentivizing homeowners and small businesses to install solar panels.
- VV. Georgia Wyman asked how many hours of sunlight it would take to generate power if the panels are covered with snow.
- WW. Logan Nicoll said, if properly installed and angled, the snow should fall off the panels. He thinks it's about 4.3 hours of sunlight per day. He said that systems are designed around that. It is more efficient to be closer to use the energy as close to where you get it as possible.
- XX. Alan Isaacson said the Energy Chapter does address some of the possible residential upgrades such as heat pumps.
- YY. Logan Nicoll said he would like to see the town take a more proactive role with the town buildings.
- ZZ. Terry Carter said that most people cannot afford electric vehicles.
- AAA. Logan Nicoll said that right now it is not feasible, but technology will improve.
- BBB. Phil Carter said that some towns are hiring Energy Coordinators or starting Energy Committees to help with this. He asked if Ludlow should consider this.
- CCC. Logan Nicoll said that the Select Board was not interested in this, but it will be in the town plan. He said he will bring it back up to the Select Board. He said that most other towns do have an Energy Commission. He said that one reason the Select Board was not in favor of it was because at that time, we didn't have a full Planning Commission. There is not a lot of public interest in joining a new board.
- DDD. Aaron Galley asked if Efficiency Vermont works with the town.
- EEE. Terry Carter said that is also included in this chapter.
- FFF. Logan Nicoll said that the Planning Commission meetings are open to the public and people are encouraged to come.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

- A. Next meeting
- i. Next regular meeting is on July 18, 2017.

8. **ADJOURN**

- A. **MOTION by Alan Isaacson and seconded by Logan Nicoll to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber

Alan Couch, Chairman

Logan Nicoll

Terry Carter

Norman Vanasse

Alan Isaacson