

PLANNING COMMISSION

PRELIMINARY MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

March 20, 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Alan Couch, Chairman	Alan Isaacson
Terry Carter	Logan Nicoll

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Norm Vanasse

STAFF PRESENT:

Rose Goings

OTHERS PRESENT:

Andy Becker	Kristen Garvey	Melissa Perrino
Sharon Bixby	Marji Graf	Jason Rasmussen
John Denner	Eliza Greene	Susan Rhodieck
Terry DiNapoli	Justin Hyjek	Marissa Selleck
John Donohue	Kim Lampert	Phil Stratman
Rosa Donohue	Beth Lee	Ken Tedford
Eileen Dunseith	Pat McLaughlin	Heather Tucker
Richard Dunseith	Julie Nicoll	Dana Wilson
Thomas Foster	Ian Nugent	Jamie Wilson
Aaron Galley	Chris Perrino	Vincent Guerrero-Okemo Valley TV
Meghann Galley		Lisha Klaiber, Recorder

1. CALL TO ORDER

A. Alan Couch called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL BY RECORDING SECRETARY

A. All Planning Commission members present, except Norm Vanasse.

3. Consideration of any Changes, Additions or Removals to the Agenda

A. No changes made.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

A. The minutes to be approved are from the meeting of February 20, 2018.

- B. **MOTION by Logan Nicoll and seconded by Terry Carter to approve the minutes February 20, 2018 as amended. Motion passed unanimously.**

5. **COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS**

- A. There were none.

6. **TOWN PLAN**

- A. Alan Couch advised that the Planning Commission will be working to create a town plan that will be relevant for the next 5 to 10 years. They recently updated the Vision Statement which includes promotion of sustainable growth, responsible development and maintaining the character of the town.
- B. Logan Nicoll advised the town plan, when adopted will be for 8 years. The Planning Commission received a grant to get help re-writing the current town plan. It is too big and long-winded. The board wants to make the town plan more readable with clearer goals. Schools are a part of this. The town plan will have things needed to be done and who will be responsible for obtaining these goals.
- C. Alan Couch advised that the board had received 3 letters from Newton Rose, Chris Miele and Leslie Stuart and Wendy Neal who were unable to make this meeting. They will be scanned and attached to the end of the minutes.
- D. Jason Rasmussen said that he will be helping the Planning Commission with the update to the Town Plan. The goals are to make it easier to read, seek community input, make the layout clearer, focus on implementation and address statutory requirements. The proposed document outline will include:
- i. Introduction
 - ii. Vision Statement or Guiding Statement
 - iii. Role in Region
 - iv. Landscape
 - v. Community
 - vi. Plan for Future
 - vii. How to make it happen
- E. Andy Becker said that said it does not include promoting business in the village.
- F. Justin Hyjek said he would like them to remove “resort town” as Ludlow is more than that.
- G. Aaron Galley said Ludlow is a town with a ski resort, not a ski resort. He would like to see promoting small scale high tech manufacturing.
- H. Terry Carter said the Planning Commission would like to see good universal broad band.
- I. John Denner asked how many manufacturing companies are in town. He said that fiber optics would be helpful. He asked where Ludlow would be without the ski resort.
- J. Alan Isaacson said he does not see the mountain leaving, but we do need to diversify. The real question is how to make that happen.
- K. Terry Carter asked how Ludlow can encourage young people to move here.
- L. Jamie Wilson said Ludlow needs better paying jobs and people to fill them.
- M. Jason Rasmussen asked if it is housing cost or the type of housing.
- N. Alan Isaacson said cost is an issue.
- O. Eliza Greene said that the Vision Statement does not focus on growth.
- P. Alan Isaacson said it has to be managed growth.

- Q. Justin Hyjek said Ludlow needs to offer services and facilities that make the town desirable, such as dog parks, bike path and schools.
- R. Kristin Garvey said we need a vibrant, independent school.
- S. Jason Rasmussen recounted that people would like to see affordable housing, jobs, better internet and cell phone service.
- T. Eliza Greene said they need to beautify the village like Streetscapes and lights.
- U. Ken Tedford said they could move the telephone and electrical lines underground, between Main and Pleasant Streets and put up decorations on Main Street.
- V. Julie Nicoll said they could make Main Street parking on one side only.
- W. Sharon Bixby said the sidewalks need to be walk-able throughout the village.
- X. Terry Carter noted that it is dangerous to walk by the gas stations because there are no sidewalks,
- Y. Logan Nicoll said there are no sidewalks on the north side of the street.
- Z. Justin Hyjek said the crosswalks need to be more visible and they are dictated by the state.
- AA. Jason Rasmussen said there are state restrictions.
- BB. Justin Hyjek said people drive too fast and the crosswalks need better signage.
- CC. Aaron Galley said he likes the radar speed signs in Chester. He added that the signs on Main Street blink on the wrong side and should be moved closer to the road.
- DD. Alan Isaacson said that Route 103 is a state highway in places through Ludlow, and the state dictates the speed limit. He said that he thinks it is wrong for Andover Street to be 25 MPH, while Main Street through the village is 30 MPH. He thinks we need to lower the speed limit on Main Street.
- EE. Jamie Wilson suggested that owners of empty store fronts could make them look nicer if they put posters or some decoration in the windows.
- FF. Aaron Galley said the empty buildings are also, not in good shape, but to refurbish them would be very expensive. He suggested local incentives for maintenance and upkeep.
- GG. Logan Nicoll advised that with the Village Center Designation, businesses are eligible for grants and tax incentives to improve their buildings.
- HH. Rose Goings advised that some businesses have been able to make use of those incentives.
- II. Terry Carter said she would like to put that kind of information, such as available incentives, in the town plan.
- JJ. Dana Wilson asked what kind of public relations the town has for advertising.
- KK. Marji Graf said that in the 1996 Area Chamber of Commerce Guide, it listed goals for 2000.
- i. Development: Revitalize and improve Main Street. Create a unified streetscape.
 - ii. Preserve historic character of the village
 - iii. Promote heritage
 - iv. Development of year round employment
 - v. Diversification of Ludlow's economic base
 - vi. Affordable year round housing for residents
 - vii. Recreational path for walking and biking along the Black River
 - viii. Re-establishment of rail service.
- LL. Marji Graf continued saying that the good news is that by 2018, Scenic Route 100 Byway was established and Green Mountain Railroad is thinking about moving its main station from Chester to Ludlow. An engineer will be coming in the spring to assess the building. Once they know the cost, they would like some buy-in from the town, Okemo and organizations so they know it is wanted. She added that transportation throughout the village (from the train depot to town) is needed and a bike path for families. She also noted that they tried to get Uber or Lyft, but we don't have the numbers or drivers.

- MM. Jason Rasmussen said there has been a problem with permitting issues and costs for the bike path.
- NN. Jamie Wilson said that Buttermilk Falls Road is dangerous because of speeders and traffic.
- OO. Alan Couch said the Select Board has discussed this at their meetings. They need to talk to Chief Billings about the speeding.
- PP. Alan Isaacson said the overall road conditions, both state and town, are not good.
- QQ. Aaron Galley suggested “speed humps”, not bumps.
- RR. Alan Couch said that people want to do the right thing, but we still need zoning regulations. The regulations need to be broad enough to allow people to develop their property and not become unenforceable. The current regulations are good, but may need some tweaking.
- SS. Terry Carter said the Planning Commission works on the town plan and zoning regulations. We recently added ridgeline protection, limiting general development within a certain distance from the top of specified ridges. This will limit clear cutting.
- TT. John Donohue asked what if someone wants to demolish a building and rebuild.
- UU. Alan Isaacson said they would have to comply with the current zoning regulations.
- VV. Jason Rasmussen said they also should consider what if there is a fire and a piece of land becomes open for development. What does the town want or not want to be built.
- WW. Alan Isaacson said they want to encourage small businesses.
- XX. Logan Nicoll said there is language in the town plan to encourage businesses that do not take away from the downtown businesses. There is a concern about the lot by Bixby Road. The Planning Commission tried to establish a maximum square foot limit to new commercial buildings.
- YY. Ian Nugent asked about the Sunoco expansion, with a Ramuntos. He said there are already a few established pizza restaurants in town.
- ZZ. Terry Carter said it would be Little Caesars and the project was changed voluntarily by the applicant because of the zoning regulations and a neighbor who came to the meeting.
- AAA. Jamie Wilson said the town caters to out-of-staters and having a pizza restaurant open after 9:00 PM would be good.
- BBB. Justin Hyjek asked about Cumberland Farm.
- CCC. Rose Goings said they will be replacing the tanks and pumps and reopen.
- DDD. Aaron Galley asked about Sam’s.
- EEE. Logan Nicoll said the building is in the floodway and the building requirements are very restrictive.
- FFF. Eliza Greene asked about the large signs at the gas stations.
- GGG. Rose Goings said they are grandfathered.
- HHH. Justin Hyjek asked if there is any way to keep out more gas stations.
- III. Jason Rasmussen asked how they can make the town more year round.
- JJJ. Alan Isaacson asked how we build a viable community where people want to live.
- KKK. Logan Nicoll said there are not enough town recreation areas. West Hill has deteriorated. We need to focus on summer public recreation.
- LLL. Richard Dunseith said without the mountain, the town is not sustainable and most businesses cater to tourists. We need a sustainable base within the town. We need to attract one to three larger businesses, such as a brewery or tech company. We need to increase the tax base. There is plenty of land available without being in the downtown.
- MMM. Jamie Wilson said we need more activities like the Penny Sale.
- NNN. Phil Stratman said we need to look for national events, such as car clubs, motor cycle clubs or RV clubs that would bring high revenue.
- OOO. Alan Isaacson asked if that would be by the Chamber of Commerce or the town.

- PPP. Sharon Bixby mentioned urban sprawl and said there are open spaces on Route 103.
- QQQ. Jason Rasmussen said we need to work within the state rules and to have a balance.
- RRR. Terry Carter said we don't want to encourage development that takes away from the downtown.
- SSS. Rose Goings said there are development constraints on Route 100N.
- TTT. Jason Rasmussen advised that the Planning Commission "beefed up" the Energy Chapter of the town plan.
- UUU. Terry Carter said the Planning Commission included language that said we do not encourage renewable energy projects that do not benefit Ludlow rate payers.
- VVV. Marji Graf said that she gets complaints that people miss their tee times because they can't find the golf course. We need signs to make it easier to find things.
- WWW. Rose Goings said the state does not allow off premise signs; it falls under the state billboard law.
- XXX. Terry Carter said the businesses should address that problem.
- YYY. Marji Graf asked about the light at the intersection of Routes 103 and 100N.
- ZZZ. Logan Nicoll said the project is supposed to start later in the spring. He added that that is the highest, accident-prone intersection in the state.
- AAAA. Marissa Selleck, Melissa Perrino, Kristen Garvey and Heather Tucker representing the BRISC advised that the purpose of the organization is to establish an independent school, operating as a business. It will serve Ludlow, Mount Holly and surrounding areas. It will keep Black River High School sustainable. The group meets Thursdays at 6:30 PM at the school and anyone who is interested is welcome at their meetings. They are setting up a 501(3) (c) non-profit organization. They have contacted an attorney and spoken with the person who worked with the Bennington School transition. They have set up a Go Fund Me site.
- BBBB. Logan Nicoll asked if there is anything the Planning Commission can help them with in the town plan.
- CCCC. Heather Tucker said they need to find out how to be able to continue using the building.
- DDDD. Logan Nicoll asked about transportation to and from the school.
- EEEE. Heather Tucker said that is on the transition list.
- FFFF. Alan Isaacson asked how it would be sustainable with so few students.
- GGGG. Jason Rasmussen said the Planning Commission would make a list and prioritize it. They have until May 2019 to finalize the new town plan. The Planning Commission will be working on this pretty much any month and people are invited to attend their meetings,
- HHHH. Alan Couch said meeting minutes are posted on the town website.
- IIII. It was noted that the minutes are recaps, not verbatim.

7. **ADJOURN**

- A. **MOTION by Terry Carter and seconded by Alan Isaacson to adjourn this meeting. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber

Alan Couch, Chairman

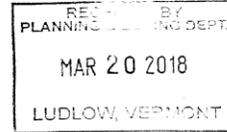
Logan Nicoll

Terry Carter

Norman Vanasse

Alan Isaacson

Newton Rose
7 Orchard St.
Ludlow, VT 05149
newtonjrose@gmail.com



March 20, 2018

Dear Ludlow Planning Commission,

Thank you for holding a community input forum on March 20, 2018. Unfortunately, I am unable to attend this meeting due to a prior engagement. I would, however, like to submit my thoughts regarding revisions to the Municipal Plan.

The Vision Statement (page 3) lays out the guiding principles for the future of the village and town. I believe that the vision should focus on the community, environment, and economy. Consider revising opening line from *“Ludlow is a small New England resort town that exhibits a pride of place and sense of community characterized by a healthy natural environment including forested mountains, an agrarian landscape and a historic village settlement”* to *“Ludlow is a small New England town characterized by a vibrant community, dynamic local economy, and healthy natural environment which includes many forested mountains, hills, and valleys.”* While it is important to acknowledge Ludlow’s unique landscape, I don’t believe that it can be characterized as agrarian in 2018.

The next line describing its “picturesque nature” should explicitly define the goal and scope of preservation. I believe that this line should instead read, *“Ludlow seeks to remain satisfying to residence and attractive to newcomers by maintaining and encouraging elements including natural and historic landscapes, scenic mountain vistas, recreational opportunities, and a prosperous downtown area.”*

Finally, “safe roads” in the final sentence of the Vision Statement should be replaced by a “safe and reliable transportation infrastructure” to include a more all-encompassing definition of roads. Additionally, “good schools” should be replaced with “high quality educational opportunities” to reflect upcoming changes to Ludlow’s school structure.

I largely support the goals of the Village and Town of Ludlow. I would, however, like to offer a revision to the goal encouraging *“a strong, stable and diverse rural economy that provides satisfying and rewarding job opportunities to meet the needs of the Town.”* While “satisfying and

rewarding jobs” are important, I believe that Ludlow should also promote well-paying jobs.

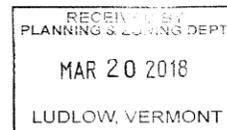
Lastly, I recommend an additional goal acknowledging the changes already taking place in the environment and their effects on our community. This final goal should recognize the challenges that global climate change brings to Ludlow and that adaptations to the local community, economy, and environment will be necessary. With foresight, the Town and Village of Ludlow can remain resilient.

Thank you for considering my recommendations and for working to enhance the Village and Town of Ludlow, Vermont.

Sincerely,



Newton Rose



As the Select Board looks to hire a new Town Manager and the Planning Commission asks for input from the community about the direction they would like to see the town move, it is essential to consider ways that the town and mountain can work together to enhance the area.

One of the things that sets Ludlow apart from other New England ski areas is that Okemo Mountain is in an area with a vibrant downtown.

Consider what Ludlow has to offer:

- An abundance of natural resources- mountains, lakes and the Black River.
- Architecture: The Black River Academy Museum, Fletcher Memorial Library, three beautiful churches, the mills, the Town Hall with its renovated the auditorium, some of the old buildings and homes on Main Street, Pleasant Street, High Street and Gil Terrace.
- A history that is well documented at the Black River Academy Museum.
- Cuisine: Ludlow has developed the reputation of a town with a growing local food scene.
- Art: Fletcher Farm, several local galleries
- Commerce: Okemo Mountain Resort; golf course; small independent retailers and restaurants; law offices; real estate offices; financial advisers; and a vibrant two season Farmers Market on Main Street
- Community groups: Ludlow Streetscapes, FOLA, Ludlow Senior Center, Black River Good Neighbors...just to name a few

Ludlow is a tourist town, but it is also home to several thousand people. By identifying and building on Ludlow's assets; we can maximize the tourist experience, increase commerce and enhance our community. We should also be looking at ways to attract more year-round residents to expand and strengthen our community further.

If a survey was created for residents and Ludlow/Okemo visitors asking what experience they are looking for in Ludlow, you might get a better sense of people's expectations. This would help shape a vision for the town.

Here is the beginning of a wish list for Ludlow based on years of feedback from residents and tourists:

Infrastructure:

- Collaborate with Ludlow Streetscapes on a concentrated effort to enhance Main Street. Many improvements to our downtown have been made over the years, thanks to the diligence of a small group of volunteers. The town should consider increasing resources (funding and manpower) to continue and expand on this effort.
- Maintain the "New England Village" landscape by strengthening the limitations on the scale/size of development within the village of Ludlow (and the entrances to Ludlow). This could help prevent the possibility of dollar stores and strip malls being built within the city limits.
- Bike path/walking path

- Attract small retail shops to occupy empty storefronts on Main Street (which will enhance and complement the mix of existing businesses)
- Ensure that Ludlow has fast internet to make it competitive with other communities
- Repair sidewalks
- Increased/improved parking.
- Create a Weekly Community News email blast that details weekly activities and meetings. It should include links to the different departments and organizations.

More community involvement from the town on issues and activities:

- Take an active role in working with the independent school committee to help make Black River Academy a reality.
- Ensure that the Black River High School building is put to good use. Possibilities include creating co-working spaces that, along with high-speed internet, can attract motivated workers who add to our economy; potential site for continuing education in collaboration with community colleges; prospective food hub
- Expand the role of the Rec Department to work with various community groups to help develop and expand meaningful youth programs and other community programs (concerts and theatrical programs in conjunction with FOLA; seasonal street fairs/food events in conjunction with the local businesses and restaurants; team sports programs for adults: softball, broomball, etc); wellness programs in collaboration with the healthcare center and local practitioners of massage therapy, acupuncture, polarity, etc.
- Maximize use of Community Center- create cooking programs in the kitchen; exercise and wellness programs (may fall under Rec program). Use the community center foyer as a vehicle to promote local activities

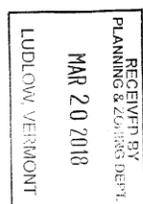
We are excited that Ludlow is looking to the future. Ludlow is a great town to live, work and play. Let's keep it moving forward!

Wendy Neal and Leslie Stuart

Rose Goings

From: Chris M <chris569mi@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 20, 2018 3:16 PM
To: planning@ludlow.vt.us
Subject: Planning Commission meeting

Chris Miele



Rose, I can not attend this meeting as I already have something scheduled.

Here are a couple of things that I would bring up.

- *How does the Town attract new business. Not just a Gas Station or Restaurant. Bigger business and Tech business to our region.
 - * What and who developed the "Town Plan"? Do they focus on Economic Development?
 - * Does anyone in Planning/Zoning, Town Manager, or Select board do any Research on what younger Families and employees to the town?
 - * TIF District - Would researching the use of a TIF district be beneficial to the Town.
 - * Promotion/creation of other recreational opportunities for our residents including youths.
- Reading some of the town plan on the website says it all. We had mills, GE etc and they left so now we offer fewer job opportunities and we really never replaced those jobs over the years.

Thanks Chris