

PLANNING COMMISSION

PRELIMINARY MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

March 19, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Alan Couch, Chairman
Terry Carter (by phone)

Alan Isaacson
Aaron Galley

Logan Nicoll (by phone)

STAFF PRESENT:

Rose Goings

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jason Rasmussen
Alan Meier

Lisha Klaiber, Recorder
Janice Meier

Ed McEneaney-Okemo Valley TV
Marissa Selleck

1. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Alan Couch called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL BY RECORDING SECRETARY

- A. All Planning Commission members present, Terry Carter and Logan Nicoll by phone.

3. CONSIDERATION OF ANY CHANGES, ADDITIONS OR REMOVALS TO THE AGENDA

- A. None were needed

4. APPROVE MINUTES

- A. The minutes to be approved are from the meeting of February 19, 2019.
B. **MOTION by Alan Isaacson and seconded by Aaron Galley to approve the minutes February 19, 2019 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.**

5. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

- A. There were none.

6. **MUNICIPAL PLAN**

A. Energy Section.

- i. Janice Meier said that she has concerns about the Energy Section. Some of the concerns are about wood burning. She said that removal of large trees result in more CO₂ being released into the air. It is her opinion, that wood should not be burned for heating. Her house is a passive house and is heated with an energy recovery system. She said that the system takes in cold outside air and is heated inside. Neighbors' are burning wood and the smoky air is taken into their system. They have internal filters, but external filters are not available. They also solar panels and an electric vehicle. She said that a byproduct of burning wood is the release of toxic chemicals into the air.
- ii. Aaron Galley said that the standards for passive houses are very tight and must bring in outside air.
- iii. Janice Meier said that when you burn hardwood; the NO₂ released is 300 times the potential of CO₂. She understands that not everyone can have a passive house, but they can take other steps for energy saving such as weather stripping.
- iv. Alan Meier said that they understand that wood burning is a tradition in Vermont, but should not be encouraged. He said that he also would like to see charging stations in town, but they must be careful of the type, because Tesla stations can only be used on Tesla cars. He suggests the library or the Ludlow Electric office for possible locations. He also suggested putting solar panels on town hall and the schools. He suggested buying local building material, reducing building construction waste, better waste disposal and using bamboo instead of hardwood where possible.
- v. Aaron Galley said that there is an environmental impact of burning wood as well as from burning oil or propane. He said there is also a carbon impact of clear cutting acres for solar panels. It also involves a lot of diesel to run the equipment to do the clearing. He added that they did mulch all of the trees cut on the solar project on Barker Road. He added that there are not many contractors who are able to build a passive house or a "pretty good house." He said that the electricity still has to come from somewhere for the charging stations. He does advocate solar panels.
- vi. Alan Meier said that they are considering expanding their solar panels and also are looking into wind power.
- vii. Rose Goings said that the smoke from other houses is going into the Meier's house. She said that oil and propane make less smoke and wood is cheaper.
- viii. Aaron Galley said that the end of life for the foam, plastic and composite used in the foundations is not good. He said that foam is a petroleum based product.
- ix. Terry Carter asked the Meiers to write up some suggestions.
- x. Alan Isaacson said that some of it is already in the energy section.
- xi. Logan Nicoll said that the Castle is looking into some grants for energy. He said that there may be some state level grants for charging stations.
- xii. Alan Isaacson said the library and the electric company office are too far away from the downtown for charging stations. He said that last month's meeting, the board discussed Shaw's and the municipal lot.
- xiii. Logan Nicoll said the municipal lot is leased in the floodway.
- xiv. Alan Isaacson said that Shaw's is also in the floodway.
- xv. Rose Goings said that she thinks they can put charging stations in the floodway.
- xvi. Logan Nicoll said he will get the grant information for the board.
- xvii. Alan Isaacson said they will need to talk to the owners of the lots.

B. Plans for the Future

- i. Jason Rasmussen said that he emailed the beginning of this section.
- ii. Alan Isaacson said that it should read “live, work and play” not recreate. He voiced concern about references to IMERYYS, as they filed bankruptcy.
- iii. Rose Goings said that it was the Windsor site that caused the problems.
- iv. Alan Isaacson said that when Johnson & Johnson was sued, they were involved in the lawsuit about baby powder causing cancer, the talc mines are trying to protect themselves.
- v. Logan Nicoll said that IMERYYS does not expect any disruptions in their Ludlow operations. They hope to settle law suits out of court.
- vi. Alan Isaacson said he does not know what they want to put in the town plan about this. He said that all references to “family” with regard to housing should be changed to “unit.”
- vii. Jason Rasmussen referred to the map and indicated the western part of town for future land use and where it is referred to as “forest lands.” He suggested that the part labeled Conservation be changed to Forest Land, with the aquifer overlay. They would be better able to address the new state forestry requirements for town plans that way.
- viii. Aaron Galley said if it is all state owned, does what we do have much of an impact.
- ix. Jason Rasmussen said not really. He then referred to the Village Mixed use area and asked how they will put the Village Center designation on the map.
- x. Alan Isaacson said it’s an overlay. He added that it may be expanded.
- xi. Rose Goings said that she doesn’t think it will be expanded, but that the downtown district may be expanded.
- xii. Alan Isaacson said it could be an overlay or outline.
- xiii. Rose Goings said the area by Village Pizza has lots of floods.
- xiv. Alan Isaacson said housing could spread. The Village Center and Village Commercial could continue down Pond Street to the fire station. He would like to see the Commercial district developed there, enclosed by housing.
- xv. Jason Rasmussen said he would change the language on the map.

C. Policies

- i. Jason Rasmussen asked about the Policies
 - ii. Alan Isaacson said that numbers 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12 and 13 are mostly the same and could be combined.
 - iii. Jason Rasmussen said he would consolidate them.
 - iv. Terry Carter suggested that they keep #4.
 - v. Alan Isaacson said they are redundant and should be combined. He said that references to Drive Throughs and Drive Ups should also include Drive Ins. He said that “and bars” should be added to restaurants. Also, “excluded in any part of town.”
- D. Jason Rasmussen said that he will need to finish the Implementation matrix.
- E. Alan Isaacson said it needs to be condensed.
- F. Aaron Galley questioned #6.
- G. Logan Nicoll said they need a place to put “encourage sustainable building practices.”
- H. Aaron Galley said there are no building inspectors.
- I. Rose Goings added for single family homes. She said that if people rent out their homes, they have to go through the Fire Marshal to make sure the structure is up to code. She said that anyone building a new home or putting in an addition greater than 500 square feet must have it energy certified by the state in order to get a CO.
- J. Aaron Galley referred back to #6 and asked why the town should be responsible to mitigate for flood damage.

- K. Jason Rasmussen said there were 3 houses done in town where there was repeated flood damage.
- L. Rose Goings said that since Ludlow was in the NFIP through FEMA, we have to watch our flood programs. East Hill Road had 3 structures that were bought out by FEMA. It is cheaper to buy them out than to rebuild.

7. NORTHERN BORDER REGIONAL COMMISSION ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION

- A. Alan Isaacson said that he and Aaron Galley had attended a meeting for the NBRCE. The organization used to be the borders of ME, VT, NH and NY along the Canadian border. It now is all of VT, NH, most of ME and part of NY. Money is available for projects such as infrastructure, roads, transportation. Charging stations could be included in this, with a 50% grant from them and possibly a 50% grant from AOT. Money may be available for schools. He said their website is NBRC.gov. They have as much as \$24,000,000 available. He said that he sent an email to Liz Bridgewater from the Windham-Windsor Housing Trust, but has not heard back. He said it looks like this may be a good source of funds for planning projects.
- B. Jason Rasmussen said he went to their meeting in Bellows Falls and learned that Cavendish is looking to improve its telecommunications in the area (Ludlow, Cavendish, and Weathersfield) and this may be a source of funds.
- C. Logan Nicoll asked if there are areas that are favored for grants.
- D. Alan Isaacson said physical infrastructure projects like roads, charging stations and possibly affordable housing. You would submit a proposal for a grant to them and they would review it. If approved, they would send it to the state, then to the governors of the 4 states. They try to disburse the funds equally. You would have to go over this with the town manager and Select Board. You have to have the proposal specifics fairly well nailed down. There are 3 go-arounds.
- E. Jason Rasmussen said they encourage you to go for the first go-around.
- F. Aaron Galley said you have to get a letter of notification in in April and the proposal in by May 10th.
- G. Alan Isaacson said that at this time, we have no real project identified.
- H. Jason Rasmussen asked if there is any interest in an internet project with neighboring towns.
- I. Aaron Galley said there is another program to benefit the region.
- J. Jason Rasmussen said this is an annual program.

8. SWCRPC REPRESENTATIVE AND ALTERNATE

- A. Rose Goings said that Logan Nicoll is no longer the Alternate to the Regional Planning Commission and with Norm Vanasse's passing; the Representative position is also vacant. She asked if any of the Planning Commission members are interested or if anyone knows of anyone who may be interested. We need to have the names to present at the next Select Board meeting (April 1st.) She said that it is a monthly meeting, on the 3rd Tuesday of each month.
- B. Jason Rasmussen said the meetings generally last about 2 hours.
- C. Logan Nicoll said it includes lunch.
- D. Alan Isaacson said its only value is to be able to talk to staff and get support.
- E. Rose Goings said she will volunteer to be the representative, but would still like to have an alternate.
- F. Alan Isaacson said he is not interested.

9. **OTHER BUSINESS**

- A. Woodchips
 - i. Aaron Galley said that he is looking into a Canadian company that manufactures woodchips treated with magnesium chloride. They are spread on the sidewalks and stay on top of the snow. When the snow is gone, they can be swept up and composted. He thinks this may be an improvement to the sidewalks in Ludlow in the winter. The company wants a US distributor.

10. **ADJOURN**

- A. **MOTION by Alan Isaacson and seconded by Aaron Galley to adjourn this meeting. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisha Klaiber

Alan Couch, Chairman

Alan Isaacson

Terry Carter

Logan Nicoll

Aaron Galley