

February 18, 2016

PC Members Present: Jean Vissering (Chair), Julie Potter, Norm Hill, Ray Stout, Kim Watson, Jack Pauly, Mark Lane, and Jay Stewart

Others Present: Town Administrator Bruce Johnson; Selectboard Members Gene Troia and Kim Swasey; Village Committee Members Bob Morey, Frank Pratt, and Michelle McFadden; CVRPC Senior Planner Eric Vorwald

Call to order: 7:02 p.m.

Changes to Agenda: Update on Park 'n Ride

Public Comment: None

Addition to Agenda: Update on Park 'n Ride

TA Johnson explained that the planned park 'n ride facility at 110 VT Rte. 14 N is nearing the end of the design stage, with draft plans available for review. The Selectboard is expected to sign off on the design at its February 29th meeting. The plans now include four Level I electric vehicle charging stations. Conduit for future installation of a Level II charging station will be added to the plans after Washington Electric Co-operative, which is donating the Level II station along with installation and a 5-year maintenance/service plan, agrees to a specific site for the unit. The Development Review Board will consider approval of the facility at its April 5th meeting. The hope is to put the project out to bid in May with construction in late summer.

Kick-off Meeting for Development of the East Montpelier Village Master Plan

- **Hosted by the Planning Commission in Partnership with the Selectboard and Village Committee**
- **Coordinated by Eric Vorwald, Senior Planner, Central VT Regional Planning Commission**
- **Project Funding from a 2016 Municipal Planning Grant from the VT Department of Housing and Community Development**

The town recently received a 2016 Municipal Planning Grant to develop an East Montpelier Village Master Plan. Under contract with the town, the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission has agreed to produce a draft plan, including regulations and maps, and then work with the East Montpelier Planning Commission to refine the draft into a viable guidance document for the community.

Chair Vissering welcomed the Selectboard and Village Committee members to the kick-off meeting, provided a brief history of the planning efforts for the East Montpelier Village area leading to the current grant-funded master plan effort, and then introduced Eric Vorwald, CVRPC's senior planner and point person for the contracted services.

Mr. Vorwald led the group through the steps laid out in the project's scope of work:

- Kickoff meeting;
- Public engagement throughout the process;
- Review prior EM Village-based studies and evaluate current conditions;
- Develop prospective village boundaries and planning scenarios within those boundaries;
- Develop growth projections based on the various scenarios;
- Craft a draft plan including regulatory elements.

The project essentially starts with tonight's kickoff meeting and should reach its conclusion in April 2017. The intent is to have a draft plan in place by December 2016/January 2017.

The ensuing discussion centered on a few main points:

- A prime goal should be to build on the 2011 Village Study Report:

- This report, created by the Village Committee with CVRPC assistance, was developed with extensive public input and provides a solid base for crafting a more in-depth plan.
- Any planning effort needs to stay focused on key infrastructure elements:
 - Wastewater treatment availability is a major growth limiting factor;
 - Potable water, whether from wells or from the currently-private, potentially public Crystal Springs water system, and the interconnected issue of fire safety, must be accounted for;
 - Planning scenarios will be developed with and without water & wastewater infrastructure limitations.
- Village boundaries will be difficult to define:
 - The existing Village Center designated area was driven by the state program and is not reflective of the actual village bounds;
 - The “Upper Village”, the area along VT Rte. 14 S, should be included;
 - Northern and southern extents need to be determined, perhaps as far north as the Bragg Farm area and south to the Cross VT Trail crossing of US Rte. 2;
 - The eastern line could extend all the way to the business area near Plainfield, all the way to Plainfield Hardware;
 - It would be nice to extend the western line to the elementary school;
 - Find a balance between existing & desired uses and determine the space requirements to match;
 - Start with a bubble defined by all points a mile beyond the designated Village Center zone.
- We need to engage the education community in this planning process:
 - Find ways to bring the village into the curriculum or simply emphasize this planning effort to those that already include village elements in the curriculum;
 - Engaging the children will help to draw adults into this process.
- We need to gain understanding of the commercial sector:
 - Determine what’s working and what are the limitations.
- Affordable housing should be an element of any plan:
 - The town lacks options for affordable housing;
 - Village housing could work in concert with public transit, an option not available elsewhere in town;
 - The master plan and associated regulations need to include elements that either incentivize lower-cost housing or remove barriers that preclude development.

Mr. Vorwald agreed to develop a village area map that extends a mile out from any point within the current Village Center Designation zone. He will examine prior village area studies and research development constraint issues within the extended area as a first step toward devising realistic scenarios for future village growth. Mr. Vorwald will present an update on his efforts at the PC’s March 17th meeting.

The PC will focus on big picture issues, such as developing a solid working knowledge of the current water & wastewater infrastructure and potential options for improvement as well as engaging the business community to determine how to enhance village commerce. First steps will include:

- Inviting Sam Anderson, Executive Director of the Central VT Economic Development Corporation, to a PC meeting to discuss business realities in the village area;
- Meeting with officers of the EM Fire District &/or Crystal Springs Water System to gain understanding of the current potable water infrastructure in the village and plans for the future.

Chair Vissering closed the kickoff meeting with big thanks to all the participants.

Update on the Public Service Board’s Certificate of Public Good Proceedings on the BDE East Montpelier Lazar Solar, LLC Application for a 500 kW Solar Array on the Cassani Property at the South End of East Montpelier Village

On February 5th the PC submitted a comment letter to the Public Service Board summarizing its meeting with representatives of BDE East Montpelier Lazar Solar, LLC. No filings or other news has been received regarding the PSB proceedings since that date.

Update on Current Happenings at the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District

PC members discussed the spate of news articles on the potential defection of Barre Town and Williamstown from CVSWMD as well as the subsequent decision by the district to suspend its efforts to develop a new recycling facility. The town's CVSWMD representative will be at the Selectboard's March 7th meeting to provide an update.

Review Minutes

January 21, 2016

Motion: To approve the minutes as presented. Made: Mr. Stout; second: Ms. Watson. Passed unanimously.

February 4, 2016

Motion: To approve the minutes as amended. Made: Ms. Watson; second: Mr. Lane. Passed unanimously.

ZA Report

No new permit applications since the February 4th PC meeting.

DRB Report

The next meeting will likely be April 5, 2016. Applications are expected from the town for the park 'n ride facility and Orchard Valley Waldorf School to change the use of the 174 Coburn Road property from residential to multiple school uses.

[Mr. Lane left the meeting]

Other Business

Chair Vissering expressed a desire that the PC continue work on other issues while moving forward on the Village Master Plan project. In particular, the PC needs to follow up on last year's Heitmann property/Gallison Hill Road growth area discussion and participate in the debate on the future direction of the town's land conservation program.

Motion to Adjourn. Made: Mr. Hill, second: Ms. Watson. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by C. Bruce Johnson, Town Administrator