

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT

The Planning Commission turned over one position in 2020. Jean Vissering stepped off the commission after many years of service and leadership; her contributions are both appreciated and missed. Paul Eley was appointed by the Selectboard to serve until the 2021 Town Meeting.

With the Governor's declaration of the COVID-19 state of emergency in March, the Planning Commission was unable to meet in person. The commission took a two-month hiatus, resuming with remote online meetings in May.

The primary focus of the Planning Commission's work continued to be drafting updates to the town's land use and development regulations. After much discussion, the Planning Commission decided to set aside the comprehensive draft presented in 2019, and instead develop specific amendments to the town's existing regulations. During 2020, the focus of this effort has been new village zoning districts and related amendments to implement the 2017 *East Montpelier Village Master Plan*. This work will continue in 2021. Meanwhile, the town's zoning remains unchanged. State law requires an extensive public process and multiple public hearings before zoning regulations can be amended. Notices of public meetings and hearings will be made on the town website, Front Porch Forum and, schedule permitting, the *Signpost*.

In November, AT&T filed an Advance Notice with the state Public Utility Commission (PUC) for a proposed cell tower near Jacobs Road. Although the town has no direct role in permitting telecommunications facilities, it is a statutory party in the PUC's approval process. The Planning Commission dedicated one of its meetings to questions and answers with the applicant and the public. The PUC granted an extension to the Advance Notice period that was requested by the Planning Commission and Selectboard. In conjunction with the Selectboard, the Planning Commission has scheduled a public information meeting about the cell tower for January 2021.

Individual Planning Commission members serve on other related committees, including the Development Review Board, the Capital Improvement Committee, the Resilient Roads Committee, the Energy Committee, and the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission holds its regular meetings on the first and third Thursday of each month, starting at 7:00 PM. Meetings will be held remotely until in-person meetings are allowed again. The PC encourages interested citizens to attend any of its meetings; meetings begin with an opportunity for public comment. Persons may also contact any of the PC members (as of January 2021) below:

JULIE POTTER, *Chair*
ZACH SULLIVAN, *Vice Chair*
KIM WATSON, *Corresponding Secretary*

CLARICE CUTLER
PAUL ELEY
SCOTT HESS

SIU TIP LAM
MARK LANE
JACK PAULY