

February 18, 2021

PC Members Present: Julie Potter (Chair), Zach Sullivan, Clarice Cutler, Scott Hess, Siu Tip Lam, Mark Lane, Paul Eley, Jack Pauly
Others Present: Kristi Flynn (Recording Secretary), Andi Colnes, Laureen Gauthier, Chuck Hertz, Beth Hertz, Judith Dillon, Erica Zimmerman, James Gascorn, Ruben Bennett, Shaileen Bennett, Mike McCarthy (SunCommon)

Call to Order: 7:03pm

Roll Call Attendance

The Chair took roll call attendance; the PC members noted above were present.

Statement Regarding Remote Public Meeting

The Chair noted that as a public body, the PC must still follow open meeting laws. Vermont is allowing remote meeting. The Chair read the recommended statement from VLCT regarding meeting remotely.

Changes to Agenda: None

Public Comment: None

Update on Cell Tower Siting Research

The Chair thanked the volunteers who helped with reading town plans. The group reviewed 30 out of about 40 plans, looking at cell tower siting and protecting key resources. Most towns have weak discussions if at all; many just say they want better cell coverage/service, don't often distinguish between other telecommunications. They might have general statements but no specifics. Some towns have statements on design standards regarding height, elevation and ridge lines. The group found six plans that might be useful as models.

Next steps

- Complete research
- Dan Smith will look at the Quechee analysis, which is a methodology on scenic views and aesthetics
- Compare key themes in other towns
- Review regulations to see where we can strengthen our language

Ms. Colnes asked about a quick amendment to the Town Plan regarding the Longmeadow/Horn of the Moon scenic area. The Chair noted that the language in the Town Plan and regulations are strong enough but the PC will amend as soon as possible while following all the required processes for town amendments. Ms. Zimmerman expressed her appreciation of the hard work done; Center Road residents are willing to help/observe as the process moves forward. As they recently went through the process, they researched areas they were trying to protect; it was a good neighborhood bonding process but they understand the privilege involved. The Chair noted that the PC will communicate with town residents once language is ready to be reviewed through public outreach. The Chair gave an update on the meeting with the SB. The PC has the SB's support but remember that others might have different opinions on usefulness of cell towers. The PC will need a broad swath of information from across the town. The PC will also need input from the SB since they have the final decision on adoption.

Discuss Proposed Verizon Cell Antennas on Silo at Fairmont Dairy

This is a de minimis category application since it is located on an existing structure at the old Lyle Haven Farm. The town cannot weigh in on the merits, can only say whether it meets de minimis criteria. Some examples of the criteria are height/width not increased, not extend 10' up and not increase impervious surface. The Chair feels that it meets the criteria. Mr. Sullivan noted that if the PUC determines it is not de minimis, it would go back to the beginning of the process with the 60-day advance notice. It is common to put antennas on silos, church steeples or other existing taller structures. The PC agrees not to comment on this application. It is not known how many antennas are on taller structures in town. Ms. Cutler is concerned with the lack of concern with environmental justice by the PUC as it doesn't seem to be part of their review process.

Discuss Village Zoning

The PC reviewed the Brown parcel (#17 on reference map) on Quaker Road. The proposal is that the front is in MU and the back in MD. The landowner wants to build a new structure further back on the parcel. MU would need to be extended to the back of the property. The PC discussed where the boundary should be moved to. The options discussed were pulling the whole parcel into MU or extending the line straight across the property. It was suggested to push the line back farther to the tree line. The PC agrees with moving the line back to the tree line and straight across the property.

Discuss Proposed rbTechnologies Net-Metered Solar Array

The PC reviewed the proposal with the applicants and SunCommon. Mr. McCarthy is the project consultant with 8 years of experience on solar projects. Mr. Bennett stated that they tried really hard to do a rooftop array but was not possible because of the structural challenges of the building. They concluded that a ground-mounted array was the only solution. It is a relatively small array as it is sized to offset the utility needs of rbTech. It is a typical array with two separate sections maintaining the setbacks from the well, Carleton Road and Route 14. The dimensions are 116' long, 48' wide and 9' tall. Mr. Hess noted that he is concerned with

taking developable land from the village for the next 20 years or so. Mr. Bennett noted that is why they looked at a rooftop solution first; any development they do in the future will have a rooftop array. Ms. Lam wondered if there were any comments from the neighbors. They all appear to be supportive, as the applicants are trying to make it as unobtrusive as possible. There are no plans for landscaping; the applicants don't feel the array is unsightly. They are not opposed to landscaping but screening would further block sightlines to the Blake Auto property. Ms. Bennett noted they try to keep the outside of the Hangar building as neat and tidy as possible and will do the same with the array. The PC has the opportunity to comment to the PUC. The Chair read from page 86 in the Town Plan: no reflecting light, no dominant feature, not block views of neighbors. The PC asked the applicants to consider some deciduous trees along Carleton and maybe some shrubs along Route 14. They want to help the project fit in with a village scale. Ms. Bennett is concerned with any screening blocking sightlines for people coming off Carleton Boulevard. Mr. Bennett stated they are very mindful of aesthetics and always check in with neighbors. For perspective, the Hangar building is 102' long and the array will be about as long as the skating rink. Mr. McCarthy noted that no one will get any glare from this project as it will be built with tempered glass which is low glare. Mr. Bennett noted that they chose this option which will limit the visual impact. Mr. Sullivan stated that it's important that local companies have taken visual impact into consideration. Ms. Dillon asked about an overlay of environmental impacts and Mr. McCarthy answered that there are no listed features on the property except an abandoned well and will maintain a 25' buffer. For the timeframe, the application will be submitted in about three weeks, with the trench dug after mud season. The Chair requested that the application be delivered by e-mail.

Updates

- Capital Improvement Committee – no update
- Energy Committee – no update
- Resilient Roads Committee – no update
- Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission – Director of the Central Vermont Career Center presented their role in workforce development. This is part of the process of updating the Regional Plan.

ZA Report

- 0 new permits since last meeting

DRB Report

- No update

Review Minutes

February 4, 2021

Motion: I move to approve the minutes as amended. Made: Mr. Hess, second: Mr. Lane

Vote on Motion: Passed 8-0

Training/Education

UVM Town Officer Education – April 12, 13, 15; free training, more information to follow

Other Business

- Judith Dillon asked about the Enhanced Energy Plan. It is on the Action list in the Town Plan. The PC didn't have the capacity to work on it and the SB reestablished the energy committee to address developing a plan. That work has stalled; this will need to be a PC project.
- Ms. Lam wondered about commenting on the solar project. The Chair noted that the PC has to wait until final application with details is filed; the PC can decide at that point if they want to comment.

Motion to Adjourn. Made: Mr. Lane, second: Mr. Sullivan. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:04p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Kristi Flynn, Recording Secretary