

April 1, 2021

PC Members Present: Julie Potter (Chair), Zach Sullivan, Clarice Cutler, Scott Hess, Siu Tip Lam, Mark Lane, Gianna Petito, Richard Hall, Kim Watson

Others Present: Kristi Flynn (Recording Secretary), Jean Vissering, Laureen Gauthier, John Ordway, Andi Colnes

**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

**PC Organization: Nomination and Election of Officers**

**Chairman** – nomination of Zach Sullivan by Scott Hess; nomination of Kim Watson by Mark Lane (declined); Mr. Sullivan elected by unanimous consent

Ms. Potter turned the meeting over to Mr. Sullivan.

**Vice Chairman** – nomination of Clarice Cutler by Julie Potter; nomination of Kim Watson by Mark Lane; vote by roll call: Ms. Cutler was elected 6-3

**Corresponding Secretary** – nomination of Kim Watson by Scott Hess; Ms. Watson elected by unanimous consent

**Adopt PC Rules of Procedure**

The PC reviewed the revisions from the previous meeting.

**Motion:** I move to adopt the *Planning Commission Rules of Procedure and Ethics of the Town of East Montpelier, Vermont*; made by Ms. Potter, second by Mr. Hess.

**Vote on Motion:** Passed 9-0

**Discussion Cell Tower and Scenic Resources Updates to Town Plan**

The PC reviewed the draft of the updates to Chapter 9 of the Town Plan. Horn of the Moon/Sanders Circle/Jacobs Road area added to the Scenic Resources table. Mount Ellen and Camels Hump were included as distant views. For Map 12, Significant Natural and Scenic Views, the County Road area (for a short distance, the White Mountains can be seen) is on the table but not on the map. Ms. Vissering feels that the revisions cover the concerns raised by the residents. Ms. Vissering mentioned Brazier Road area, which is the cover photo of the Town Plan; it is not on the table or the map but could be added. The PC discussed the process of amending the Town Plan and whether other changes should be made now. The process is the same for amending as adopting: still have original life end; summarize amendment; one public hearing, possibly one informational meeting; send to SB; SB has two public hearings; SB can adopt or send for town vote; submit to CVRPC for statutory review/approval. Ms. Vissering stated that scenic views must be along commonly-traveled roads. Ms. Petito wondered if views from public trails should be considered. The Brazier Road area was not part of the original process. The Chair noted that whatever changes are made, the process to adoption/approval is the same. Ms. Potter suggested adding an Action for the next update to do a significant review of the Scenic Resources, including trails.

Review text of Cell Tower section

The section will be located right after the Energy section in the Town Plan. On page 3, the references in the Town Plan to the zoning regulations give the regulations more weight. Ms. Lam wants to make sure there is consistency with the regulations. Ms. Potter noted that the PC has the power to participate but the language in the Town Plan must be emphatic and strong even though we don't have regulatory authority. The Chair asked the PC to think about Goals and Actions for the new Cell Tower section. Ms. Petito wondered if 'foreground' has a legal definition; this will be researched for a future meeting, ask Ms. Vissering as she is interested in being a resource for the PC. Ms. Colnes asked if the PC will focus on siting criteria at the next meeting and asked the PC to explore whatever the town can do regarding cell tower proximity to homes.

**Discuss Village Zoning**

Tabled to the next meeting.

**Review rbTechnologies Net-Metered Solar Array Application**

The solar application has been deemed complete; there are not too many changes from the last review of the application. The PC has 30 days to comment or file to be an intervener. A de-commissioning plan was not part of the application. The Chair noted that the PC can add this as a condition. Ms. Potter noted that the PC asked for a de-commissioning plan and landscaping maintenance on the solar

project in the village, which might also be relevant here; the PC does not have to be an intervener to make requests. It was discussed that the some neighbors were unhappy with the previous project and the PC was in the middle of creating the Village Master Plan and was upset with six development lots removed from the village. The current project is on a commercial lot and the energy will be used on-site as opposed to the other project's energy being sold to utility companies. Ms. Petito noted that the intervener process is easy and might give comments more weight. The PC needs to decide how active a role they want to take. The de-commissioning plan is a big concern, but it's unclear if PUC will require a plan on a smaller, net-metered, on-site project. Ms. Potter would like to see more screening from the Route 14 side coming from Barre as it is the entry into the village; how far are we willing to push the issue? Ms. Petito would like to request local, native plants and species. A motion is needed for any action in the 30-day window.

**Motion: I move to prepare the form to be an intervener and have the Chair draft a letter with comments to be reviewed at the next meeting.** Made: Ms. Potter, second: Mr. Hess

Discussion: these two pieces can be separated into different motions at the next meeting.

**Vote on Motion:** Passed 9-0

### Updates

- Capital Improvement Committee – the committee is waiting for complete membership; Mr. Troia is no longer a member
- Energy Committee – no update
- Resilient Roads Committee – Mr. Lane reported that the committee is bidding out to have ash trees removed along County road; they still have grant money to plant new trees
- Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission – at the 4/13 meeting Ken Jones from ACCD will talk about how COVID-19 has affected the Vermont economy; there will be a CVFiber update, including plans to use federal funds

### ZA Report

- One new permit

### DRB Report

- The next meeting is on April 6 – dealing with a restaurant/retail market in the village, where Video Box used to be, and a sketch plan for 8 homes (PUD/PRD) on the Old LaPerle Farm property
- Ms. Potter would like some feedback from the DRB on PUD/PRD regulations as they go through the process

### Review Minutes

March 18, 2021

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

**Vote on Motion:** Passed 9-0

### Training/Education

- Town Officer Education Conference – 4/12, 4/13 & 4/15 – must register (free)
- Vermont's Ecology and Environment: An Intro to Town Planning for Natural Resources (3 session course) – April 5, 12, 19, 7-9pm
- Caring for Natural Resources: Taking Action in Your Community (3 session course) – May 3, 10, 17, 7-9pm

### Other Business

- Meeting in Person – the SB has control over whether the building is open or not; the PC might explore meeting outdoors; the PC discussed meeting in person once all members are fully vaccinated; Mr. Hess wondered if the town could make Zoom meetings a permanent option going forward for members who are sick or out of town
- Ms. Watson asked the PC members to review the DRB documents regarding the development on the Old LaPerle property and give comments or suggestions before the 4/6 DRB meeting
- Mr. Hess wanted to thank Ms. Potter for her tireless work as Chair; she did unbelievable work in a thankless job
- Thank you to Mr. Sullivan for taking the reins

**Motion to Adjourn.** Made: Mr. Lane, second: Ms. Petito. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:00p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Kristi Flynn, Recording Secretary*