

April 7, 2022

PC Members Present: Zach Sullivan (Chair), Clarice Cutler, Spencer Hardy, Lauren Oates, Richard Hall, Scott Hess, Kim Watson, Mark Lane

Others Present: Kristi Flynn (Recording Secretary), Clare Rock (CVRPC), Sam Lash (CVRPC), Blaine Hoskins (CVRPC), Paul Erlbaum

Call to Order: 7:05pm

Changes to Agenda: None

Public Comment: None

Election of Officers

Chair – Mr. Sullivan nominated by Ms. Watson; elected by consensus

Vice Chair – Ms. Cutler nominated by Ms. Watson; elected by consensus

Recording Secretary – Ms. Watson nominated by Mr. Hess; elected by consensus

Approve Rules of Procedure and Ethics

Motion: I move to adopt the planning Commission Rules of Procedure as presented, Made: Ms. Cutler, second: Mr. Hess.

Vote on Motion: passed

Energy Planning Overview with CVRPC

Clare Rock introduced her team. She mentioned that the regional plan will be coming out towards the end of the year but the local efforts don't need to wait for that. Some energy information was provided in 2017. Ms. Rock has reviewed EM's Town Plan and noted that the town does have some preferred siting language, as well as language regarding scenic resources. Ms. Hoskins had sent the town some examples of other plans that have good language. The CVRPC is in favor of incorporating the energy plan into the Town Plan instead of having it as an appendix. Ms. Rock noted that there are some pieces that are needed in order to meet the current state standards: in the analysis section, we need more data, targets and maps. The CVRPC can help with those updates; the energy section can be 'greenlighted' if CVRPC has helped gather the data. Ms. Lash noted that she is very interested in making sure that the town has the most up-to-date data and information. The Chair stated that one of the challenges is the amount of conserved land in town. Ms. Lash stated that it might be important to look at how other cities and states are looking at the challenges in creative ways. She would like to encourage the town to think long-term, such as who will be tracking the plan in the future. Ms. Rock wondered what the town's timeline is, but the PC doesn't feel like they know enough about the subject to put it on a fast track. Ms. Watson suggested working on the Energy Plan and the Town Plan update at the same time, though the Town Plan expires in 2026.

Ms. Rock noted that the CVRPC can help with the data, the analysis and the mapping piece of the Energy section. Ms. Lash is available to help, as well. She suggested re-evaluating the scenic designations; are there any overlaps in the Telecommunications section for preferred siting for renewable energy. There is a great opportunity for the town to look at the regional energy policies. Ms. Watson noted that there are three active farms in town that have contributed to the large amount of land that is conserved or in current use. Mr. Hall wondered if it would be possible to create an updated Energy section then incorporate it into the Town Plan update in 2026. There was some discussion regarding where the best places to put solar would be, such as on existing structures or on open land. The Chair reported that the Energy Committee has been dormant for a couple years and is not organized currently; he feels there are interested people in town and would like some help figuring out public engagement as well as what the Planning Commission's roles and responsibilities are. Holding a brainstorming meeting with people interested in energy saving topics might be a way to engage people and get a new Energy Committee started. Ms. Lash is interested in working with this group on recruitment and retainment.

Ms. Rock wondered if there are things the town would like to get out of the Energy Plan. Ms. Watson noted that the PC is probably not at a place to articulate that yet. Ms. Cutler feels that a robust plan would help the DRB when evaluating development in town. The Chair mentioned that transportation should be a part of the plan; are there things that the town hasn't thought about yet. Transportation could mean making your transportation more energy-efficient, such as personal and municipal vehicles; are there enough charging stations in town to support the vision. It is important to think about ways to reduce the number of miles driven. One of the issues in town is more parents taking their kids to school instead of taking the bus. The next steps would be gathering the data; the CVRPC will coordinate some information with Ms. Lash as the point person for the town. The PC should consider the intersection of scenic resources and preferred siting locations. Mr. Erlbaum contacted the PC as a citizen concerned with energy conservation and is willing to help in any way he can.

The PC discussed the work that the Chair, Ms. Cutler and Ms. Petito have started on. A matrix will be updated that shows where everything is in the Town Plan. A lot of the standards are already there. The first step is getting an Energy Committee re-started and deciding how many PC members should be on it. It was suggested that a good first step for public engagement may be to send out a survey. The Chair will put out a notice on Front Porch Forum to see if there is any interest and contact Cort Richardson.

Updates

- Capital Improvement Committee – elected new officers; proposed three new line items to the SB: garage, town building, sidewalk maintenance; reaching out for capital plans
- Energy Committee – no update
- Resilient Roads Committee – talked about North Street and Sparrow Farm road; Foxfire will start taking down ash trees; committee will prune the trees planted last year; the committee will go to the SB on 4/18 to discuss the shade tree application
- Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission – meeting 4/12 re: municipal development
- Updates to Select Board re: Zoning and Town Plan Amendments – SB will discuss the proposed amendments at their first meeting in May and have someone from the PC come to the first meeting in June

ZA Report

- Five new permits

DRB Report

- No meeting since last PC meeting

Review Minutes

March 17, 2022

Motion: I move to approve the minutes as written. Made: Ms. Watson; second: Ms. Cutler

Vote on Motion: Passed 8-0

Other Business

Ms. Watson wanted to remind the PC that it is their job to find and recommend a zoning administrator for the town, if it becomes necessary.

Motion to Adjourn. Made: Mr. Lane, second: Mr. Hess. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:59p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Kristi Flynn, Recording Secretary