

April 21, 2022

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

Others Present: Bruce Johnson (Zoning Administrator), Kristi Flynn (Recording Secretary), Paul Erlbaum (8:15pm)

Call to Order: 7:01pm

Changes to Agenda: None

Public Comment: None

Town Staffing Updates

The ZA reported that the new Town Administrator starts tomorrow; the new Treasurer starts in 2-3 weeks. The ZA job has been advertised and it is the PC's job to interview candidates and recommend someone to the SB. The Recording Secretary is resigning as of June 30, 2022, so the PC, DRB and SB are looking for minute-takers. The Municipal Assistant is also leaving this summer, possibly in August. Ms. Watson suggested having the new town employees come to a PC meeting to be introduced.

Discuss Town Plan Amendment Hearing Organization and Presentation

The hearing will be held at the Fire Station with a remote option. The format will be pretty standard, with the Chair giving a short presentation of what the changes are. After the presentation, the PC will hear comments and suggestions from attendees, after which the PC will hold a short meeting to discuss the comments. It was suggested to have someone take notes on a whiteboard for comments. Gianna is willing to take notes remotely but not in person. The online comments could be projected at the Fire Station.

The Chair sent around a draft version of the presentation. The PC reviewed the document. Mr. Hess felt that the cell tower topic was covered very well. The Chair has received several written comments from residents on Center Road; the comments were received after the article in the SignPost came out. Ms. Cutler wondered if it was necessary to mention the property value and health issues related to cell towers. The Chair will not put those points in the presentation, but it could be put in the regulatory section on why the town cannot intervene on those issues. The PC will come back to this topic once comments are received. The Chair wants very clear reasoning in the Town Plan on why the town cannot get involved on these issues. The Chair will do a sweep for additional typos but will not make substantive changes to the presentation.

Discuss Energy Plan Data Needs and Presentation

The Chair wondered if the PC members had looked at the data needs and how it might be presented. Mr. Hess thought the draft looked thorough but thought we might want to have an expert go through it. The tables in the plan were informative and explained where the town is currently. The Chair wondered if we want a more fluid presentation of the current uses of energy across the town and then deal with how things might change. The PC discussed telling the story about how the energy use could be changed across town, particularly vehicles and heating. Talking about incentives is an important piece of the story. Ms. Watson would like to put out the data and mirror what Northfield did in their plan, as some of the data is already outdated. There is quite a bit of solar in town and wind may not be an option because of noise and locations. Ms. Petito would like to see the data laid out before the PC decides what story to tell. The specific targets are not always realistic, and it is not clear if the shifts in energy use are taken into consideration. Ms. Petito would like to ask the CVRPC to help combine the data into tables that make sense. Mr. Hall wondered if the CVRPC is currently working on gathering current data for the PC to review; he also wondered if most of the data is collected from surveys or 'real' sources, such as kilowatt usage. The CVRPC is working on getting current data for the town. The PC would like to know what kind of energy sources they should be promoting and where in town. Ms. Watson noted that the only way to get complete and full data is to go to every house in town. The PC would need to know how much land is necessary to generate the energy that is needed in town. Mr. Hardy would like to see some energy use and generation comparisons to other towns in the area. The Chair wondered what the PC would like to see as a next step. It was suggested using Northfield's plan as a template. The big takeaway is knowing when the CVRPC will get us the updated data. For available land, it is important to know how much land there is and what the constraints are. It is interesting that hydro power and biomass are not listed in any of the data. The targets noted are for Central Vermont not just for East Montpelier, particularly in the maps provided. The constraints are based on the zoning regulations, which could be opened up with changes to the regulations.

Discuss Public Outreach and Engagement of Energy Committee

PC discussed public outreach to residents interested in being on a reconvened Energy Committee. It was suggested to send out a survey. Mr. Hess noted that it is extremely important to have a chairperson who will move the process along. The PC discussed residents in town that might have an interest and/or experience with energy topics. An announcement should go out on Front porch

Forum. The SB needs to re-start the Energy Committee. It is important to talk about and clarify roles and responsibilities between the Energy Committee and the PC. It might be a good idea to have a job description; Sam Lash of the CVRPC is interested in supporting the recruitment and retainment for the Energy Committee; the Chair will check in with her. The PC discussed re-starting the Energy Committee before or after figuring out what the committee can help the PC with. Ms. Watson will reach out to Cort Richardson to see if he is interested. Mr. Erlbaum was encouraged by the Hartford Climate Plan and wondered whether it could be used in EM.

Updates

- Capital Improvement Committee – no update
- Energy Committee – no update
- Resilient Roads Committee – no update
- Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission – next meeting in 5/10; read the minutes from the 4/12 meeting for municipal updates

ZA Report

- Eight new permits

DRB Report

- Next meeting on 5/3; Ms. Watson cannot attend if anyone from the PC would like to attend

Review Minutes

April 7, 2022

Motion: I move to approve the minutes as amended. Made: Mr. Hess; second: Ms. Watson

Vote on Motion: Passed 7-0-1 (Petito abstained)

Other Business

With the change in zoning administrator, it is a good idea for the PC members to read through the regulations, as the PC will probably be more involved regarding interpretation of the regulations.

Motion to Adjourn. Made: Mr. Hess, second: Ms. Cutler. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:56p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Kristi Flynn, Recording Secretary