

Minutes of the East Montpelier Planning Commission

Approved 12/15/22

December 1, 2022

PC Members Present: Zach Sullivan (Chair), Clarice Cutler (via zoom), Kim Watson, Richard Hall, Scott Hess, Mark Lane (via zoom), Gianna Petito (via zoom)

Others Present: Deirdre Connelly (via zoom), Maia Stone (via zoom)

Call to Order: 7:02 pm

Changes to Agenda: None.

Public Comment: None.

Review Minutes

The group reviewed the November 3, 2022 minutes.

Motion: To approve the November 3, 2022 minutes as presented. Made by Ms. Watson, second by Mr. Hall. Passed unanimously.

Meet with and discuss candidates for open PC seat

Maia Stone is interested in the open PC seat and joined the meeting to meet the committee members and discuss the position. The present committee members introduced themselves. Mr. Sullivan explained that the PC oversees the vision for how the town is built out through the Town Plan and through zoning. The committee meets on the first and third Thursdays of each month in a hybrid format. Ms. Watson added that the two key areas of work for the PC are the LUDR and the Town Plan. The Town Plan is updated once every eight years and is the most complex piece of work for the committee. The LUDR was developed in 2009 and is generally only updated with occasional amendments. Mr. Sullivan explained that the current vacancy is being filled by appointment, but it will come up for election in March 2023. Mr. Sullivan also noted that Ms. Cutler's and Mr. Hess's seats will be up for reelection in 2023. Ms. Cutler stated she intends to run again. Mr. Hess stated he does not intend to run again.

Mr. Sullivan asked Ms. Stone why she was interested in joining the PC. She explained that she grew up in East Montpelier and has some knowledge of the zoning and LUDR through her mother's work on the East Montpelier Trails. She has recently returned to East Montpelier and is interested in how the town has developed and would like to be a part of how it continues to evolve. Mr. Hess asked if Ms. Stone plans to run for election for the seat if she is appointed. Ms. Stone said yes, she intends to run.

Mr. Sullivan asked if there were any more questions. There were none.

Motion: To go into executive session to discuss inviting Maia Stone to fill the vacant PC seat. Made by Ms. Petito, second by Mr. Hall. Passed unanimously.

Executive session began at 7:23 pm.

Executive session ended at 7:26 pm.

No action taken.

Motion: To recommend Maia Stone for the open PC seat to the Selectboard. Made by Mr. Hess, second by Ms. Watson. Passed unanimously.

Mr. Sullivan thanked Ms. Stone for her interest in the position. He explained that he would bring this recommendation to the Selectboard meeting on Monday, December 5. If Ms. Stone is appointed to the position, she will need to meet with Town Clerk Laquerre to fill out some paperwork before the next PC meeting. Town Clerk Laquerre can also provide information on how to get on the ballot for the seat in March 2023. Ms. Watson suggested Ms. Stone look on the town website for bylaws and more information about the committee. Mr. Sullivan invited Ms. Stone to stay for the rest of the meeting.

Discuss potential changes to flood regulations (LUDR, section 9)

Ms. Watson met with Mr. Cueto from the DRB to discuss these recommended changes in more detail. The recommended changes are intended to add clarity around small accessory structures in the flood map area. They do not affect the substance of the regulations and do not make the regulations more lenient than what was developed with CVRPC. Ms. Watson recommended waiting to go through the process for an amendment until the PC has additional changes to the zoning regulations to bundle with these recommended changes. Mr. Sullivan asked the group if they were comfortable leaving these recommended changes for a later amendment. The present PC members were comfortable with waiting for a later amendment.

Ms. Watson noted that she and Ms. Petito had begun discussing changes to the zoning areas and suggested that those changes might be a good project to bundle with these floor regulation updates for a later amendment. Ms. Petito noted that she and Ms. Watson had begun drafting a work plan but had not gotten much further on the zoning areas discussion.

Energy Committee Recruitment Updates

Mr. Sullivan noted that he had advertised the Energy Committee on Front Porch Forum and got one response so far from an individual who was already on the PC's list to contact. Mr. Hall reported that he had spoken to Austin Cate, who is interested in working on the Energy Committee. Mr. Hall asked Mr. Sullivan to email Mr. Cate with more information about the committee. Mr. Sullivan reported that Tom Fisher is still interested in being involved. Mr. Hall offered to talk to Road Foreman Perry about getting involved.

Mr. Sullivan is keeping track of the names and contact information for the people who are interested in being part of the Energy Committee. Ms. Watson asked what the next steps are. Mr. Sullivan said he plans to go to the Selectboard with the list of names and the Selectboard will need to make the formal appointments. There will be a feature in the next Signpost, so Mr. Sullivan would like to wait until that comes out to see if it sparks any more interest from the town.

Town Meeting Election Check-in

Mr. Sullivan noted that earlier in the meeting the group had discussed the seats that are coming up for reelection. Ms. Cutler plans to run for reelection, but Mr. Hess does not. This is a good time to begin recruitment for that upcoming vacancy.

Additional Project Check-in

Mr. Sullivan suggested the PC may want to consider getting another project going in addition to the Energy Plan. He noted the preliminary conversations Ms. Petito and Ms. Watson had started about parcels might be a good project for the committee to start working on.

Ms. Watson noted that in the past, the PC had periodically drafted a list of possible future planning and zoning topics. She suggested that might be helpful for the current PC to draft a similar list. She offered to distribute a copy of the last list to committee members. Mr. Sullivan suggested the PC may also want to go through the goals in the current Town Plan and see if any of those goals need to be addressed.

Mr. Sullivan noted the timeline for the Town Plan. The current Town Plan will expire in June of 2026, and typically the PC begins working on the Town Plan three years before its expiration. He suggested the PC might draft a report on where the town stands with respect to the current Town Plan as a way to prepare for the next Town Plan. Ms. Petito liked that idea of a progress report.

Ms. Cutler left the meeting at 7:56 pm.

Updates

- **Capital Improvement Committee-** Mr. Hess reported that the committee met in November and voted to level fund the Capital fund. Their next meeting will be Monday 12/5 at 4pm.
- **Energy Committee-** no update
- **Resilient Roads Committee-** Mr. Lane reported that the committee marked trees on Barnes, Bliss, and Murray roads and will put that work out to bid in January with the expectation that work will begin in the spring.
- **Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission-** Mr. Sullivan reported that the RPC has approved the amendments, so they are official and live. Updated documents will be available soon. Ms. Petito commended the PC on their work on these amendments.

ZA Report

The committee had the most recent permit report. There was no discussion.

DRB Report

The next DRB meeting will be Tuesday 12/6 at 7:00 pm.

Other Business

Mr. Sullivan noted that historically the PC has held a holiday party meeting in December. He noted that hybrid parties can be tough to coordinate and suggested the committee postpone a party for an in-person meeting perhaps in the spring.

Motion: To adjourn. Made by Mr. Hess, second by Ms. Petito. Passed unanimously.

Meeting closed at 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Deirdre Connelly.