

Minutes of the East Montpelier Planning Commission

Approved 1/5/23

December 15, 2022

PC Members Present: Zach Sullivan (Chair), Clarice Cutler, Richard Hall, Scott Hess (via zoom), Maia Stone, Mark Lane (via zoom)

Others Present: Deirdre Connelly

Call to Order: 7:02 pm

Changes to Agenda: None.

Public Comment: None.

Review Minutes

The group reviewed the December 1, 2022 minutes.

Motion: To approve the December 1, 2022 minutes as presented. Made by Ms. Cutler, second by Mr. Hall. Passed unanimously.

Energy Committee Updates

Mr. Sullivan noted that a group is beginning to form and he thinks they won't have an issue deciding on leadership for the committee. A feature is going out in the Signpost in January and Mr. Sullivan hopes it might get the attention of a few more people. Mr. Hall reported that Road Foreman Perry seemed interested in joining the Energy Committee.

Mr. Sullivan will attend the Selectboard meeting on Monday 12/19 to give them an update on the Energy Committee and the PC's work more generally.

Discuss potential additional Projects

Mr. Sullivan shared a document listing all action items from the town plan that were assigned to the PC and suggested that the list might be a good place to start looking for additional projects for the group. He also suggested that an assessment on these action items could be a good project. Mr. Hall and Mr. Hess agreed that assessing progress on the list was a good way to build in some accountability for these goals. Ms. Cutler added that it was a good time for an assessment, and it could be a way to identify priorities before the group begins working on the town plan.

Mr. Hall noted that housing is a hot topic across the state at the moment and wondered if that could be a good project for the group to dig into. He suggested gathering some data on housing in the town, such as short-term rentals, recent sales, and second home ownership.

Mr. Hall noted the action item 7.4.2 might be partly addressed by the 7-acre lot piece Ms. Watson has been interested in working on. Mr. Sullivan noted that Addison County regulates lot size based on average density, and it may be worthwhile to consider a similar model. Ms. Cutler added that the Addison County model requires tracking lots and subdivisions over time, and Mr. Sullivan suggested the group talk to ZA Brown about his interest in implementing new ideas in this area.

Ms. Cutler suggested looking at wastewater and village infrastructure and noted that there was an enormous amount of federal money available to make improvements. Mr. Sullivan added that alternative wastewater solutions could be part of that project.

Mr. Hall noted that senior housing wasn't on the action item list and suggested it might be a good project for the group. Mr. Sullivan added that in thinking about options for senior housing, it's important to also consider where employees will live.

Mr. Sullivan noted that the question of large parcels is related to housing; if housing is more clustered it can help preserve the larger pieces of agricultural land. Ms. Cutler noted that PUDs are rare in East Montpelier, though recent changes have made them a little easier to do. Mr. Sullivan added that they require a clear vision and lots of planning, while the Addison county density model doesn't require that forethought and planning. Mr. Sullivan suggested that the recent village plan might be a model for looking at housing issues in the town and implementing changes to the zoning. Ms. Cutler noted that the consultant Brandy had done a comprehensive look at the town and there may be some relevant pieces about housing in her recommendations.

Mr. Sullivan gave a recap of the priorities that had come from the discussion:

- Housing and senior housing
- Septic and wastewater solutions
- Large parcels and agricultural land
- Assessment of progress on action items from the town plan

Mr. Hess suggested that Mr. Sullivan also ask the Selectboard if they have any suggestions for the PC to focus on. Ms. Cutler added that Mr. Sullivan should share this shortlist with the Selectboard to get feedback. Ms. Cutler was also curious about input from other committee members who couldn't make the meeting. Mr. Sullivan will reach out over email for their input.

Updates

- **Capital Improvement Committee-** Mr. Hess reported that the committee hasn't met since the last PC meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for January.
- **Energy Committee-** No update
- **Resilient Roads Committee-** Mr. Lane reported that a new shade tree plan is in the works and the committee it will present to the Selectboard soon.
- **Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission-** No update.

ZA Report

None.

DRB Report

Ms. Cutler reported that the group met last week and had a hearing on a boundary adjustment and subdivision. It met all of the requirements and went through with no issues.

Motion: To adjourn. Made by Mr. Lane, second by Ms. Cutler. Passed unanimously.

Meeting closed at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Deirdre Connelly.