

# *Minutes of the East Montpelier Planning Commission*

***Approved 7/6/23***

June 15, 2023

PC Members Present: Zach Sullivan (Chair), Maia Stone, Richard Hall, Gianna Petito (zoom), Clarice Cutler, Erica Zimmerman (zoom), Mark Lane

Others Present: Deirdre Connelly

**Call to Order:** 7:04 pm

**Changes to Agenda:** None.

**Public Comment:** None.

## **Review Minutes**

The group reviewed the June 1, 2023 minutes.

**Motion: To approve the June 1, 2023 minutes as presented.** Made by Ms. Cutler, second by Ms. Stone. Passed 5-0. Ms. Zimmerman abstained from the vote.

## **Discuss Updates to Town Plan Chapters 2-5 (About East Montpelier, Town Governance and Finance, Community Resources, and Public Services)**

Mr. Sullivan asked the group to begin reviewing the Town Plan for areas that need revision and updates.

### Chapter 2:

- Ms. Stone noted that this chapter has some outdated language and numbers throughout
- Pg. 9: Ms. Stone noted the population projections and asked if the group thought it was worthwhile to build a new projection. Ms. Zimmerman voiced support for updating it. Mr. Sullivan suggested the state may have updated numbers for the PC to use for this section.
- Pg 11: Ms. Stone noted the organizations list and pointed out that parts of this list pop up throughout the Town Plan. She suggested updating all of the lists together for consistency.
- Ms. Stone asked if there was interest in recognizing the Abenaki communities more in this history section of the Town Plan. The group generally supported this. Mr. Sullivan suggested the group could draw on some resources for research assistance.
- Pg 13: Ms. Zimmerman asked if the goals in this section should be tied to the Energy Plan. She noted that future challenges and opportunities could include energy sustainability, climate, and affordability, all of which mesh with the Energy Plan. Mr. Hall agreed that energy is a topic the PC and town are discussing and would be worth including.

### Chapter 3:

- Pg 15: Ms. Stone noted the sentence about village locations never being studied and asked if that was still true. Ms. Cutler pointed out that a nearby property was being held for a new municipal building and Mr. Sullivan agreed that the potential new municipal building should be mentioned.
- Pg 15: Ms. Stone pointed out the discussion of the fire district and wondered if it should be trimmed down. Mr. Sullivan explained that the history would be good to retain for the record.
- Pg 15: Ms. Stone pointed out that the town officials and committees lists need extensive updates. Ms. Cutler suggested adding Conservation Committee appointments to the goals.

- Pg 21: Ms. Stone pointed out that the appraisals language may need an update. Mr. Sullivan suggested waiting to update this language until the town knows more about the timing for reappraisals.
- Pg 22: Ms. Stone noted the language about the 2018 legislature looking into new ways to fund the schools. Ms. Petito mentioned they were exploring making it income tax rather than property tax-based, and suggested the group keep an eye on the legislature before finalizing this section.
- Pg 22: Ms. Stone noted the numbers need to be updated for expenses.
- Pg 23: Ms. Stone noted the mention of the Capital Improvement Committee and suggested getting updates for this section from Ms. Watson.
- Pg 24: Ms. Stone asked if there were goals to add to this chapter and suggested mentioning the grant opportunities the town has taken advantage of since the last Town Plan. Ms. Zimmerman suggested adding some clear language about how people in the town can participate in decision-making for grant opportunities and projects that the town pursues. Ms. Petito suggested including some mention of Energy Plan goals in the language about improvements to town facilities.
- Pg 24: Ms. Cutler noted the language in the last paragraph about development versus conservation and wondered if other factors should be mentioned in the section when talking about cost structures. Mr. Hall noted that development vs. conservation was a hot topic at the time this plan was written, and suggested that language could be edited down.
- Ms. Cutler suggested the Town Plan should document the funding the town received through ARPA and how it has been allocated so far.
- Ms. Stone suggested including a section in the history portion of the Town Plan to document the town's response to Covid-19. Ms. Petito added that it should also be included in governance with a discussion about how open meetings have adapted to zoom and hybrid meetings.

#### Chapter 4:

- Pg 27: Ms. Stone noted that CVRPC is doing a survey on food resources and outdoor recreation and may have some updated info for the PC to use on this page.
- Pg 29: Ms. Petito noted the list of recreation sites needs updates. She also noted that some class 4 roads in the area are used like trails and might be mentioned. Mr. Hall suggested including the updates to the Cross Vermont trail and the new bridge along Route 2.
- Pg 27: Ms. Zimmerman noted in the section on community health the bullet point about sense of community and noted this could be filled out more with development and housing topics the PC has recently discussed. Ms. Cutler added that it may be worth noting the updated regs on lot sizes
- Pg 27: Mr. Hall noted the language about healthy food and suggested it could be updated with the increased availability of local fresh food.
- Pg 27: Ms. Zimmerman suggested including information about public transit and transit services. Ms. Petito asked if this section should mention how housing codes can impact health, and perhaps mentioning addressing lead and asbestos. Ms. Zimmerman suggested adding something about recovery services available for people dealing with substance abuse.
- Pg 31: Ms. Stone noted this section mentions a survey to the town on recreation opportunities and asked if this is still done in the town. Ms. Zimmerman suggested asking the Rec Board about the survey and perhaps including more of their activities in this section. Ms. Zimmerman also suggested including a discussion of the decreasing afterschool and summer programming in the area.
- Pg 32: Mr. Sullivan noted the mention of Morse Farm and suggested getting updates from them directly.
- Pg 33: Mr. Sullivan suggested adding an action under goal 4.3 about youth programming to Ms. Zimmerman's earlier point.

- Pg 34: Ms. Stone asked about the status of action 4.4.2. Ms. Cutler noted a trail was being explored behind the emergency services building along the Winooski.
- Pg 35: Mr. Sullivan noted the new trails should be updated and the Town Plan needs a new trail map. Ms. Cutler suggested adding a goal to develop scenic resources from the town trails.
- Pg 38: Ms. Sullivan noted that the Vermont Department for Historic Preservation should have a database the group can use to update this section.
- Pg 39: Ms. Stone noted the North Montpelier village designation should be added to this page.
- Pg 40: Mr. Sullivan noted the town cemeteries are now being maintained by an outside contractor, so this section should be updated.
- Ms. Zimmerman suggested mentioning the grant programs available for preserving historic barns.

### **Updates**

- **Capital Improvement Committee-** None.
- **Energy Committee-** None.
- **Resilient Roads Committee-** None.
- **Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission-** Ms. Cutler noted the annual meeting was held and people were assigned to committees.

### **ZA Report**

The group reviewed the report; there was no discussion.

### **DRB Report**

The DRB met and discussed some mapping issues. They ultimately did not need to review the application scheduled for the meeting.

### **Other Business**

None.

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

Meeting closed at 8:51 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Deirdre Connelly*