

Minutes of the East Montpelier Planning Commission

Approved 7/20/23

July 6, 2023

PC Members Present: Zach Sullivan (Chair), Maia Stone (zoom), Clarice Cutler, Erica Zimmerman (zoom), Nik Khosla

Others Present: Deirdre Connelly

Call to Order: 7:05 pm

Changes to Agenda: None.

Public Comment: None.

Review Minutes

The group reviewed the June 15, 2023 minutes.

Motion: To approve the June 15, 2023 minutes as presented. Made by Ms. Cutler, second by Ms. Stone. Passed unanimously.

Discuss Updates to Town Plan Chapters 5, 6 (Public Services and Infrastructure)

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

Chapter 5:

- Pg 41: Mr. Sullivan suggested including the story about Norma Raymond driving students to school that was recently featured in the Signpost.
- Pg 41: Mr. Sullivan suggested including the merger in the history section; the present PC members agreed.
- Pg 42-3: Ms. Zimmerman offered some suggestions for updates to the EMES section, noting that the newsletter and bus stop conversations aren't currently active and the school does not use Front Porch Forum for much communication. She suggested running this section by EMES staff to get input and the group agreed.
- Pg 43: Ms. Zimmerman noted the paragraph that talks about EMES offering facilities to support the entire community and suggested mentioning that the facilities are used for elections beyond Town Meeting.
- Pg 44: Ms. Zimmerman noted the population numbers should be updated on this page and that a lot of the language about U-32 seems to date back to the renovations and should be updated.
- Pg 44: Mr. Sullivan noted the Barre Technical Center's name needs to be updated.
- Pg 44: Mr. Sullivan noted that the school board structure should be updated.
- Pg 45: Mr. Sullivan noted that the discussion of Act 46 needs updating. Ms. Zimmerman suggested calling this section "District Structure", moving it closer to the governance section, and mentioning something about how kids can choose to attend other schools. Mr. Sullivan agreed and suggested moving the discussion of Act 46 to the history section.
- Pg 45-6: Mr. Sullivan noted the list of adult education programs and suggested this section could use some research and updates. Ms. Cutler noted the reference to Vermont College of Fine Arts should be removed.

- Pg 46: Mr. Sullivan asked if the goals about operating schools should remain when it is now a regional effort rather than just a town effort. Ms. Zimmerman pointed out that towns still have an obligation to provide schooling. The group flagged this section for further discussion.
- Pg. 47: Under Social Services, Mr. Sullivan noted he was uncertain about the current status of the Town Service Officer.
- Pg 47: Ms. Zimmerman suggested adding a mention of the history of the town organizing to have more community spirit, including events like Rally Day and the creation of the Signpost. She noted goal 5.4 relates to this, and the goal doesn't currently seem to connect to anything in the text.
- Pg 47: Ms. Cutler suggested finding another term to replace the word "indigent" under the history section.
- Pg 48: Ms. Stone noted the list of childcare options and wondered if this section should be updated to name more available options. Mr. Sullivan pointed out that the list focuses on programs related to income assistance and perhaps should state that more specifically.
- Pg 48: Under senior services Ms. Zimmerman suggested adding Vermont Home Health and Hospice and perhaps the Vermont Foodbank.
- Ms. Zimmerman suggested adding a discussion of prevention and recovery services, perhaps to this Social Services section.
- Pg 50: Mr. Sullivan noted he wants to check on the current scope of power for the constable and update this section. He also pointed out that the discussion of Vermont State Police should be updated to include the town's relationship with Washington County Sheriff.
- Pg 50: Ms. Cutler recalled a presentation at a Town Meeting several years ago on the spiking costs of emergency services and suggested including a discussion about those costs in this section.
- Pg 53: Mr. Sullivan pointed out that the emergency response and disaster preparedness section should be updated to include a mention of the regional services that perform this work.
- Pg 55: Under Hazard Mitigation & Flood Resilience, Mr. Sullivan suggested including a discussion of the climate impacts on flooding.
- Pg 56: Mr. Sullivan noted that the updated FEMA flood maps should be included here.
- Pg 57: Ms. Cutler noted that a mention of a 2012 Hazard Mitigation Plan and wondered if there was an updated document to reference. Mr. Sullivan noted that the plan is also referenced in the goals and actions.

Chapter 6:

- The group will review this section at the next meeting.

Updates

- **Capital Improvement Committee-** None.
- **Energy Committee-** None.
- **Resilient Roads Committee-** None.
- **Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission-** Ms. Cutler and Ms. Stone are unavailable for the upcoming meeting. Ms. Cutler noted that it will include an energy-related topic; Mr. Sullivan will reach out to the Energy Committee to see if one of them would like to attend the meeting.

ZA Report

The group reviewed the report; there was no discussion.

DRB Report

The next hearing is scheduled for July 18.

Other Business

Ms. Zimmerman mentioned that she is on the strategic planning committee for the school district and asked if the PC as a whole or if individual members would be interested in participating in the process. Mr. Sullivan felt the PC did not have a role to play in the process. No other members present expressed interest in participating.

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

Meeting closed at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Deirdre Connelly