

Minutes of the East Montpelier Planning Commission

July 20, 2023

PC Members Present: Zach Sullivan (Chair), Maia Stone, Clarice Cutler (zoom), Erica Zimmerman, Kim Watson (zoom), Gianna Petito (zoom)

Others Present: Deirdre Connelly

Call to Order: 7:02 pm

Changes to Agenda: None.

Public Comment: None.

Review Minutes

The group reviewed the July 6, 2023 minutes and made a few amendments for clarity.

Motion: To approve the July 6, 2023 minutes with tonight's amendments. Made by Ms. Cutler, second by Ms. Zimmerman. Passed unanimously.

Discuss Updates to Town Plan Chapters 6, 7, 8 (Infrastructure, Economic Development, Housing)

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

Chapter 6:

- Pg 62: Ms. Watson commented that there are lots of updates to make on this page to bring the GMT information up to date.
- Pg 63: Ms. Watson asked the group how much of the history of past upgrades should be retained in the town plan, giving the example of the singing bridge. She added that she thinks the town plan should be forward looking and not so focused on past achievements. Ms. Zimmerman agreed with the idea of being forward looking in the town plan. Ms. Watson added that the group should work with Road Foreman Perry to figure out the priorities he sees for the roads. Mr. Sullivan asked if the upgrades and recommendations should have separate sections. Ms. Cutler suggested that recommendations could stay nested within the existing sections.
- Pg 64: Ms. Watson noted the mention of the Gallison Hill study and noted that section should be updated with conclusions from that study.
- Pg 64 Ms. Watson noted that CVRPC should have data the group can use to update this table and all other tables in this chapter.
- Pg 64: Ms. Zimmerman noted that the group had talked about road congestion around the elementary school on Vincent Flats Road at the last meeting and wondered if that topic should be included in this chapter. Ms. Watson noted that hopefully that issue is a short-term one that will be resolved by the time the new town plan is adopted. Mr. Sullivan suggested that if the topic does come into the town plan, the schools section is the best place for it.
- Pg 65: Ms. Zimmerman pointed out Ms. Watson's note about the speed limit on Center Road and explained that the 25-mph speed limit is from Barnes to Dodge.
- Pg 65: Ms. Watson mentioned that the group may want to add something to the class 4 roads section about whether vehicles are allowed on the roads. The group looked at the maps and determined that map 5 shows the class 4 roads and legal trails, but does not distinguish which is which on the map.

- Pg 65-66: The group reviewed the section on ancient roads. Mr. Sullivan recommended leaving it in for the historical record.
- Pg 66 Mr. Sullivan noted the New Town Road Policy section and suggested rewording this section so it doesn't appear the PC and Selectboard are in disagreement about new roads. Ms. Watson suggested referencing the rule or policy about new roads to that end.
- Pg 66: Mr. Sullivan noted the Highway Budget section should be updated with the latest numbers. Ms. Watson suggested adding something about the Capital Improvement Committee's maintenance budget for roads.
- Pg 67: Ms. Cutler noted the section that talks about statewide efforts to improve water quality in Lake Champlain and suggested adding a mention of the stormwater discharge permit that is required as of 2018. Ms. Watson suggested adding a mention of the 2023 floods as showing the value of good road maintenance practices.
- Pg 67: Ms. Watson noted her comment about the curb cuts and suggested rewording that sentence to be more positive.
- Pg 68: Mr. Sullivan noted his comments in the document about updating the GMT route information closer to the completion of the town plan to get the latest information. Ms. Zimmerman suggested updating the ridesharing section too.
- Pg 69: Mr. Sullivan noted the map needs to be updated with the new sidewalks.
- Pg 69-70: Mr. Sullivan noted that the discussion about bikes seems geared toward recreation and suggested editing that section to be more focused on biking as a means of transportation. Ms. Zimmerman agreed and suggested adding a goal or action item about increasing bike lanes. Ms. Watson suggested adding guidance on the best routes for bike commuting.
- Pg 70: Ms. Zimmerman suggesting adding a mention of the EV charging station at the park and ride lot.
- Pg 70: Mr. Sullivan suggested the Energy Committee may want to make updates to the Regional Coordination section. Ms. Watson suggested adding a mention about bike lanes and public transit to this section too.
- Pg 71: Ms. Watson suggested some of the actions could be combined, such as 6.2.2 and 6.2.3.
- Pg 72: Under Current Status Ms. Cutler suggested adding the new composting rules. Ms. Zimmerman added that the plastic shopping bag ban could also be added.
- Pg 73: Ms. Watson noted the waste drop-offs should be updated.
- Pg 75 Mr. Sullivan noted the numbers for Greenup day should be updated under Roadside Dumping.
- Pg 75: Ms. Cutler noted that the ban on fluorescent bulbs should be mentioned under Consumer and Business Purchasing Choices.
- Pg 76: Ms. Zimmerman noted the History section needs updating. Ms. Watson suggested including a mention of the recent discussions the PC has had with state reps about wastewater options for the town.
- Pg 77: Ms. Watson noted the comment on adding new systems and recommendations for shared systems. Ms. Zimmerman suggested this was another area that could be updated to have a more positive spin. Ms. Watson agreed and suggested looking at Calais for how they've handled this topic.
- Pg 77: Mr. Sullivan noted his comment about management of wastewater and wondered if the plan should speak to more rigorous management practices. Ms. Cutler noted that the state regulates wastewater systems, so maybe the plan should just point to state resources and guidelines.
- Pg 77: Mr. Sullivan wondered if the plan should include a discussion of building solar arrays and wastewater systems on the same land. Ms. Petito noted that such a project would have to be co-designed.

- Pg 78: Mr. Sullivan noted his comment about removing the mentions of Laperle farm on this page.
- Pg 79: Ms. Watson noted the PC’s recent conversations about drinking water options should be included on this page, as well as efforts to purchase Crystal Springs.
- Pg 79: Ms. Zimmerman asked if plan should mention testing for PFAS. Ms. Watson noted that they are unlikely to be a contaminant in town and argued that if it needs to be a focus, it should be in state guidelines rather than the town plan.
- Pg 80: Ms. Zimmerman noted that U-32 is on the Montpelier water system.
- Pg 80: Ms. Watson suggested adding a mention of the spring 2023 presentation about drinking water system options from DEC to the PC.
- Pg 82: Mr. Sullivan suggested not reviewing the energy section as the energy committee will be substantially rewriting it.

Updates

- **Capital Improvement Committee-** None.
- **Energy Committee-** None.
- **Resilient Roads Committee-** None.
- **Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission-** None.

ZA Report

The group reviewed the report; there was no discussion.

DRB Report

The applicant did not come to the most recent meeting and the DRB did not have a quorum. Ms. Cutler mentioned that in cases where the DRB does not have enough people a planning commission member can be appointed as an alternate.

Other Business

Mr. Sullivan reminded the group that the PC would not be meeting in August.

Ms. Zimmerman asked whether members could attend other meetings on their own as citizens. Mr. Sullivan stated that anyone can attend as a citizen, but it would be good to check in with the chair before going presenting oneself as attending in an official capacity, and that it is helpful for him to know about meetings that members are attending in order to be able to include report-outs on the next PC meeting agenda.

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

Meeting closed at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Deirdre Connelly