

# *Minutes of the East Montpelier Planning Commission*

***Approved 9/21/23***

September 7, 2023

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

Others Present: Deirdre Connelly

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

**Changes to Agenda:** None.

**Public Comment:** None.

## **Review Minutes**

The group reviewed the July 20, 2023 minutes and made as amendment for clarity.

**Motion: To approve the July 20, 2023 minutes with tonight's amendment.** Made by Ms. Cutler, second by Mr. Lane. Passed unanimously.

## **Discuss Updates to Town Plan Chapters 6F, 7, 8 (Telecommunications, Economic Development, Housing)**

Mr. Sullivan commented that they'd decided to push the Zoning Administrator candidate interviews to the next meeting, so the group will continue reviewing the Town Plan from the Telecommunications portion of Chapter 6. Mr. Sullivan noted that broadband is only mentioned once in this section and asked if the group thought it should be discussed in more detail. Mr. Lane, Ms. Cutler, Ms. Petito, Mr. Hall, and Ms. Stone agreed that more detail on broadband access should be included in the telecommunications section.

The group moved on to Chapter 7:

- Pg 98: Mr. Sullivan noted that the list of businesses needs to be updated. He asked if the group thought it was still accurate to describe agriculture as an economic driver in the town. The group discussed and agreed that agriculture is both part of the history of the town and a current economic driver. Ms. Watson suggested added a mention of local agricultural products being available for sale in places like Fox Market.
- Pg 99: Mr. Sullivan noted the tables on this page and mentioned that the group will need to get updated numbers, perhaps from the Secretary of State.
- Pg 100: Mr. Sullivan noted that this page needs to be updated with the latest zoning and that the mention of the LaPerle Farm property should be updated. Ms. Stone noted that the mention of the sidewalks should be updated to reflect that they are no longer new. Ms. Watson suggested mentioning the new bridge connecting the bike path to Montpelier and U32.
- Pg 101: Ms. Watson noted that North Montpelier should be mentioned as a designated village center at the top of the page. Mr. Sullivan also noted the action at the bottom of the page about maintaining the Village Center designation for the historic village core.

The group moved on to Chapter 8:

- Pg 103: Mr. Sullivan noted that the graphs and numbers on this page need to be updated.
- Pg 104: Mr. Sullivan noted that the group needs to check on the rate of home building and the number of rentals in town to update this page. Ms. Watson asked about the increments used for

number of households per year, and Mr. Sullivan suggested they look at 2020 for the next line on that table.

- Ms. Watson noted that the changes to PUDs should be mentioned in this chapter, and Mr. Sullivan added that the changes for mobile homes should also be included.
- Ms. Petito suggested mentioning the condition of housing stock when there is mention of the age of a home, noting that such a mention could be helpful if future funding becomes available for remediation projects.
- Pg 104: Mr. Sullivan noted that the recent increases in home prices should be mentioned here. He also noted that the town may complete the reappraisal process during the upcoming Town Plan revisions. Ms. Petito mentioned ADUs as a way to make housing more affordable and achievable and Ms. Cutler suggested mentioning that in the list on page 107.
- Pg 107: Ms. Watson noted the mention of Habitat for Humanity and asked if those talks were still ongoing. Mr. Sullivan was unsure, and he also noted he was unsure of the status of the revolving loan funds mentioned on this page.
- Pg 105: Mr. Sullivan noted that EMSLI is no longer active. Mr. Hall noted that the senior housing issue is still present, even if the group isn't. Ms. Watson suggested mentioning that the zoning regulations allow for senior housing development in many zones and that the town would encourage it to happen.
- Pg 106: Ms. Watson asked if the home share program is still happening. Mr. Sullivan suggested the group reach out to the program to get an update.
- Pg 106: Ms. Watson looked at Map 8 (mentioned on this page) and noted that it will need to be updated.

### **Updates**

- **Capital Improvement Committee-** Ms. Watson reported that the group hasn't recently met, but the request went out for items for development in the next five years. Mr. Sullivan asked if the PC should submit something around waste water and drinking water and Ms. Watson said no, the CIC only looks for projects with a clear timeline and plan for completion.
- **Energy Committee-** Mr. Sullivan reported that the Energy Committee was zoom bombed at their last meeting, so the PC may want to consider steps to prevent that from happening at a PC meeting.
- **Resilient Roads Committee-** Mr. Lane reported that the committee looked at Guyette and Brazier roads for Ash tree removal and will likely work on Guyette next. The town is still seeking an assistant tree warden.
- **Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission-** Ms. Cutler reported that the next meeting will be 9/12 and that one of the topics will be the regional land use initiative and the regional plan update.

### **DRB Report**

Ms. Watson reported that the group met earlier this week to approve a subdivision.

### **Other Business**

Mr. Sullivan noted Ms. Connelly is stepping down as minutes-taker at the end of September.

**Motion: To go into executive session under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) – the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee, provided that the public body shall make a final decision to hire or appoint a public officer or employee in an open meeting and shall explain the reasons for its final decision during the open meeting.** Made by Ms. Watson, second by Ms. Petito. Passed unanimously.

The Planning Commission entered Executive Session at 8:04 pm and exited at 8:29 pm.

**Motion: To ask Gina Jenkins to conduct phone screenings on two of the candidates and report findings to the PC.** Made by Ms. Watson, second by Mr. Lane. Passed unanimously.

The group briefly discussed the process- Gina will email the PC after conducting the screenings telling what questions she asked and her impressions of the candidate. Mr. Sullivan will accept feedback from PC members and will make the determination on who to invite for interviews.

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

Meeting closed at 8:32 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Deirdre Connelly*