

## *Minutes of the East Montpelier Planning Commission - Draft*

January 18, 2024

PC Members Present: Zach Sullivan (Chair), Nic Khosla, Richard Hall, Erica Zimmerman (zoom), Clarice Cutler (zoom), Kim Watson (zoom), Gianna Petito (zoom)

PC Members Absent: Mark Lane, Maia Stone

**Call to Order:** 7:05pm

**Changes to Agenda:** None

**Public Comment:** None.

### **Review Minutes**

The group reviewed the January 4, 2024 minutes.

**Motion: To approve the January 4, 2024, minutes as amended.** Made by Clarice Cutler, second by Gianna Petito. Passed unanimously.

### **Discuss Next Steps on Public Engagement Exercise**

Mr. Sullivan presented the results from the brainstorming exercise from the last meeting (attached). The commission initially talked about putting the themes out for voting, and we did talk about that a little while we were doing the categorization work, and a few people thought that for what we're doing here we don't necessarily want to cut this down to a small number of things right now. We also discussed how we want to use this data for a future forum or survey at this point it's data for us to use, and we may decide that we want to include a lot of the themes/items in the survey, but may also want to ultimately do a prioritization exercise to focus on some of the areas in more depth (i.e. in some sort of in-person public engagement event/forum where we need to focus down to a smaller number of things). The forum or engagement will help us prioritize citizen's interests in the town.

Ms. Zimmerman and Ms. Petito thought that after much discussion, that we need to think about how to use the data for editing the Town Plan's Goals and Actions, and that we may want to have the Housing component as its own meeting. We want to leave open all options to gather data and allow people to express their concerns.

Mr. Hall suggested that we lead with the survey to gather data and concerns. Mr. Sullivan took a straw poll, and everyone agreed that we should begin with a survey to gather interests for actions relating to the Town Plan and Zoning. This will allow citizens to get their voices heard. The survey can also be used as an educational tool for prioritizing themes and topics. Ms. Zimmerman volunteered to look at themes and topics/items to generate a draft survey for review by the commission. Ms. Petito and Ms. Watson agreed to meet with Ms. Zimmerman and help with the draft survey.

### **Discuss Next Steps on Housing Study**

We briefly discussed a possible housing task force and thought that this should be tabled until we have a better understanding of the housing needs in all of Washington County. The data derived from a survey will help educate the PC on additional housing needs.

### **Updates**

- **Capital Improvement Committee** – No new updates.
- **Energy Committee** - No new updates.
- **Resilient Roads Committee** – No new updates
- **Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission** - Clarice Cutler reported that it was an excellent meeting covering the following topics; Clean Water Service Provider Presentation, Act 250 updates and the CVRPC did not discuss their position and last topics were Flood Recovery & Mitigation Priorities. Minutes are available on the CVRPC website.

### **ZA/DRB Report**

1 permit approval for a shed. No DRB report

### **Other Business**

We discussed the openings on the PC for commissioners and the potential for other vacancies after the elections in March. Ms. Cutler suggested that we put the upcoming vacancies on the PC on the town website after the March elections. The openings for the PC are listed on the EM website along with openings on all boards. <https://eastmontpeliervt.org/running-for-local-elected-office/>. Mr. Sullivan highly suggested that commissioner's network with any interested citizens who might be interested in serving on the PC push for a write-in campaign on election day.

**Motion: To adjourn.** Made by Kim Watson, second by Gianna Petito. Passed unanimously.

The meeting closed at 8:08 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Kim Watson*

*Approved on: \_\_\_\_\_*

## Results of the Brainstorming Session for Survey Themes and Questions

| Theme  | Item  |
|--|---|
| Sense of Community                                 | What could the town do to increase a sense of community?  |
| Sense of Community                                 | What elements of East Montpelier give a sense of community to you?                                  |
| What's Special?                                    | What are your 3 favorite things about living in East Montpelier?                                    |
| What's Special?                                    | What is something special about East Montpelier?  |
| What's Special?                                    | What are you proud about East Montpelier?   |
| Vision (Hopes)                                     | How well does the town plan reflect your understanding of this community?                           |
| Vision (Hopes)                                     | How does the town plan reflect/align with your vision for East Montpelier?                          |
| Vision (Hopes)                                     | What do you hope East Montpelier has/looks like in 10/20 years?                                     |
| Vision (Hopes)                                     | Does the town plan reflect your priorities for the town?  |
| Vision (Hopes)                                     | What do you <u>wish</u> for youe EM community?  |
| Vision (Hopes)                                     | What is your vision for the town's future?  |
| Concerns   | What are the top 3 challenges facing East Montpelier in the next 10 years?                          |
| Concerns   | What would you change about the town?   |
| Concerns   | What are your concerns about the town's future?   |
| Priorities   | What action items do you feel are the highest priority for East Montpelier?                         |
| Priorities   | What is your priority for our town's land use?  |
| Priorities   | How well does our town's resource use reflect your priorities?                                      |
| Priorities   | Are there action items in the town plan that seem high priority to you? Which ones and why?         |
| Open Space/Ag                                      | How important are zoning regs to protect open space?  |
| Open Space/Ag                                      | How/should the EM PC discourage fragmentation of Ag and forest land?                                |
| Open Space/Ag                                      | Try to keep fields undeveloped, build only along the edges  |
| Scenic Views                                       | Are there more scenic views that can be protected?  |
| Scenic Views                                       | What can be done with keeping scenic areas open?  |
| Historic Preservation                              | What is important to preserve?  |
| Historic Preservation                              | Helping to save old homesteads  |
| Public Engagement                                  | How can we engage public/make public aware of topics up for discussion in the town plan?            |
| Public Engagement                                  | How should EM PC involve residents in the planning process?   |
| Roads  | Road Maintenance and Improvement  |
| Roads  | Narrowing some of the class 3 roads   |
| Housing  | How would you feel if the permitted housing density increased in your neighborhood?                 |
| Housing  | Elderly housing in all districts  |
| Housing  | How satisfied are you with the housing options in our town [for yourself/family/friends, etc]       |
| Housing  | Do we need more housing?  |
| Housing  | How has [the issue of] housing had any impact on your work? Your family? Your friends? Describe     |
| Housing  | Should EM establish new growth area(s) to increase development/affordability?                       |
| Housing  | Mother-in-law apartments allowed in all districts   |
| Housing  | Is there interest in new growth areas on Gallison, etc?   |
| Housing  | How do we increase affordable housing?  |
| Housing  | How important is it for you to maintain the current town profile vs. sustainable population growth? |
| Housing  | Sewage/drinking water in town: what price point (generally) is acceptable to make it viable?        |
| Flood Response/Resilience                          | Given the increase in flooding, should we focus development away from the village?                  |
| Flood Response/Resilience                          | Flood response/flood planning   |
| Climate Resilience                                 | Climate impacts - planning for change re: climate change  |
| Climate Resilience                                 | How should EM promote climate resiliency in town?   |
| Negative impacts of regulation (are regs working?) | Important to reduce restrictions on how land owners can develop                                     |
| Negative impacts of regulation (are regs working?) | Acreage in all districts should be the same   |
| Negative impacts of regulation (are regs working?) | Have you been able to pursue/accomplish what you want for your property? Explain                    |
| Negative impacts of regulation (are regs working?) | Experience with regulations   |
| Negative impacts of regulation (are regs working?) | Does our zoning prevent housing development?  |
| Miscellaneous                                      | Economic growth in EM or is regional economic activity sufficient?                                  |
| Miscellaneous                                      | Fair Taxes  |