

Minutes of the East Montpelier Planning Commission – Draft

March 7, 2024

PC Members Present: Zach Sullivan (Chair), Kim Watson, Clarice Cutler, Erica Zimmerman (zoom, left 738PM), Zoe Christiansen (zoom), Ben McCall (zoom)

Others Present: Michael Thompson

PC Members Absent: Nik Khosla

Call to Order: 7:04 PM

Changes to Agenda: **Motion: To amend agenda to move February 15th meeting minutes review to after other business and instead add Town Survey next steps.** Made by Clarice Cutler, second by Ben McCall. Passed unanimously.

Public Comment: none

Welcome new Members

Zach Sullivan welcomed all new members Zoe Christiansen (also currently on the SB) and Ben McCall (also currently on the Energy Committee) to the planning commission meeting. Introductions were made by the new members and discussions about their interests in planning in East Montpelier.

Michael Thompson (a public attendee) introduced himself as new citizen to EM, he was listening in as he may be interested in planning. He also listened in on the SB meeting to get to know the town a little better.

Town Survey Next Steps and Discuss post-town meeting plans (potential need to fill vacancies)

Zach Sullivan discussed for context our cycle for planning, the Town Plan (TP) is due in middle of 2026, if the town does not complete by that time frame, then the town loses regulatory matters at the State level. Major revision to the Town Plan were made in 2018 and amended in 2022. Housing was listed as a medium priority in the 2018 plan; however, we are looking at getting public feedback to determine the priorities for the next town plan revision. Erica Zimmerman did a huge lift to get the survey ready for the Town Meeting and we thank her for that. We will now look at the next steps to get the survey out to the town people. We are looking at getting out to a wider audience. Erica Zimmerman wanted to be able to distribute in paper. The survey is a little visionary and covers an array of topics. It is a google form so easier to do online than in printed form. Erica had the Town Clerk make copies for both the Town Meeting and at the Town office in the vestibule. The Town Clerk, Rosie, will help us mail copies out upon request to the public. Erica Zimmerman sent out the survey to the PC as a field test to see how google forms worked. Kim Watson, field tested the survey that Erica Zimmerman sent out and felt it was very usable and looked excellent. A question was asked if it was anonymous for people and Erica says right now it is but we could collect emails if we wanted. The only suggestion that Kim Watson had was to provide instructions on completing the survey and Ben McCall suggested adding a

URL to complete online. Kim Watson also suggested sending it out to community groups such as Center Road, Brazier Road and North Street. Erica Zimmerman will write up a blurb for the signpost and the community groups with the URL, to mail out, or potentially to do interviews. Zach Sullivan asked too if there were groups for the Village and Sandy Pines. Michael Thompson suggested for the opening paragraph to put a description somewhere either in the survey or an on-line video by the Chair, the impact of the survey, describing how the data collection steps impact a taxpayer. Explain to the public what the data will be used for and what impacts it may have on the Town Plan or Zoning. Erica Zimmerman will write up a brief description for the signpost and Zach Sullivan will work on an explanation what the Town Plan does for EM and impacts to the TP, and will work on this post to FPF (Front Porch Forum). Erica and Zach will work together to post in both locations (FPF and Signpost).

Zach Sullivan explained to the commission the process for filling vacancies. We do have a list of write-ins. Basically, the PC posts vacancies and screens candidates via an interview process who show an interest being on the commission. The PC then makes recommendations to the Selectboard (SB) who then makes appointments. The PC agreed that we should try to do it quickly for the first round of candidates. Zach Sullivan will post something on FPF, and we will look at starting the screening process the first week in April. Planning Commission page on the website provides Zach Sullivan’s information to contact if interested.

Discuss work plan for 2024 and town plan

Zach Sullivan discussed the Town Plan timeline excel spreadsheet created by Nik Koshla for the schedule for the proposed work plan (full excel spreadsheet timeline available upon request from Zach Sullivan). The Town Plan first draft is due by March 2025, and we will be looking for a copy editor in that same time frame. Public Forum process will start in the fall and then we will turn over to SB after that. Zach Sullivan and Kim Watson described the process for updating the TP, how Chapters were divided among the members and how data collection will work using consensus data and/or CVRPC assistance. Clarice Cutler noted if needed we could move Chapters around such as housing to accommodate the outcome of the Housing Study group. Outreach for volunteer writers and editors should start in Spring 2025. We will be looking at new challenges and things we have not accomplished versus things we have accomplished. PC hearing is set for December 2025 which provides for contingency time in the schedule. It is clear we do not need to rewrite the narrative but more update to 2023 challenges. The amendment made to the town plan considered some corrections while updating the impacts of cell towers. Kim Watson recommended that we look for a copy editor in March 2025 rather than May 2025 and the commission agreed.

Task	Date	Duration	Dependencies	Comments
Zach to finish consolidating notes		12/7/2023		Zach to help consolidat
Assigned leads take notes and edit sections				Leads to collaborate wi
Chapter 1	Spring 2024			
Chapter 2	Spring 2024			
Chapter 3	September 2024			
Chapter 4	September 2024			
Chapter 5	October 2024 (2 meetings)			
Chapter 6	November 2024 (2 meetings)			
Chapter 7	December 2024			
Chapter 8	December 2024			
Chapter 9	January 2025 (2 meetings)			
Chapter 10	February 2025			
Chapter 11				
Submit 1st Draft	March 2025			

	Chapter 5	October 2024 (2 meetings)
	Chapter 6	November 2024 (2 meetings)
)	Chapter 7	December 2024
L	Chapter 8	December 2024
2	Chapter 9	January 2025 (2 meetings)
3	Chapter 10	February 2025
4	Chapter 11	
5	Submit 1st Draft	March 2025
5	Engage Community Members for contributions (ie photos)	
7	PC review of Draft	
8	Solicit external editor (ZA?)	May 2025
)	Finish 2nd Draft	July 2025
)	Public Forum	September 2025
L	PC to Incorporate Feedback	October/November 2025
2	CVRPC - review (Zach to confirm)	

Discuss Housing Study

Tabled until next meeting.

Updates

- **Capital Improvement Committee** – No new updates.
- **Energy Committee (EC)** – update by Ben McCall. CVRPC has released long awaited data to the energy committee, and they are in a happy place to look at the material. The EC is working on a draft update to the town plan for siting of renewals to incorporate the material to meet the requirements as an enhanced energy plan in the TP. They feel it should come together in the next few months. They think that it might just be a few tweaks to sections in the TP.
- **Resilient Roads Committee** – No new update. (no longer a member present).
- **Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission** – CVRPC March 12th meeting scheduled. Topics: update on CV Community Development, regional plan, and enhanced energy planning along with an introduction to Act 250 updates. Anyone interested in CVRPC meetings can go at any time they are open to the public.

ZA/DRB Report

Permits: a shed and a new home being built. April 2nd DRB meeting. The ZA will have information packets ready on March 26th for you to pick up before the meeting. (not sure if she will send by email).

Other Business

Zoe Christiansen asked if the Housing Study was done or to be done. Zach Sullivan indicated that it needs to be done so we can speak to needs in the TP and zoning.

Review Minutes

The group reviewed the February 15, 2024 minutes.

Motion: To approve the February 15, 2024, minutes as amended. Made by Ben McCall, second by Clarice Cutler, Passed unanimously.

Motion: To adjourn. Made by Clarice Cutler, second by Kim Watson. Passed unanimously.

The meeting closed at 8:25 PM

Respectfully submitted by Kim Watson

Approved on: _____