

Minutes of the East Montpelier Planning Commission – Draft

March 21, 2024

PC Members Present: Zach Sullivan (Chair), Kim Watson, Erica Zimmerman, Zoe Christiansen
Nik Khosla (zoom), Ben McCall (zoom)

Others Present: Trey Gourley, Glen Weyant, Celina Moore Barton

PC Members Absent: Clarice Cutler

Call to Order: 7:04 PM

Changes to Agenda: Motion: To amend agenda to move March 7, 2024, meeting minutes review to after Other Business. Made by Zoe Christiansen, second by Kim Watson. Passed unanimously.

Public Comment: None

Interview applicants for appointment to the PC.

Questions presented to the applicants:

1. Why are you interested in being on the Planning Commission?
2. What is your background and what strengths would you bring to the PC?
3. We are currently updating the town's zoning, which frequently involves reviewing documents before the meeting. Are you willing to do homework for meetings?
4. The Planning Commission meets on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays. We sometimes have extra meetings on other Thursdays. Are you able to regularly attend Thursday night meetings?
5. Have you read the 2018 Town Plan?
6. Have you read any of the Town's land use and development regulations?

Letters of interest were sent to the commission members by Zach Sullivan and reviewed in advance.

Name of applicant: Celina Moore Barton

My background is in green real estate and sustainable development. I am a serial entrepreneur and committed to working with fellow committee members to address key issues, foster community engagement and help our community thrive within planetary limits. I have a daughter at St. Andrews in Scotland and a son at Brown in Providence. They have both given me marching orders to help make our community enticing for young people so they may move back here and convince their friends to join them as well.

Name of applicant: Glenn Weyant

I am currently on the DRB and this has given me an opportunity to begin learning about the issues concerning planning and development in East Montpelier.

From the mid-80s thorough early 2000s I worked as a journalist covering planning boards and development in New York State, Massachusetts and Arizona.

Those experiences led to a life-long interest in land use issues and how communities wrestled with preserving a town's character, land and open spaces, while also creating housing and business opportunities. From what I can tell, East Montpelier (and Vermont in general) appears to be at a crossroads where the population is aging, drastic weather events are more common, housing stock is limited, high prices are making it difficult for many to become homeowners and property owners are feeling the squeeze from increased taxes.

Name of applicant: Trey Gourley

My partner (Matthew) and I moved to Vermont last June from Oklahoma. He is an environmental engineer and I am a social worker. We bought our home in East Montpelier as first time buyers. We live just outside the downtown area of the North Montpelier Historic District and have loved being a part of the "Singing Bridge" community for the past 8 months. We have many animal companions and hope to work the land we purchased into a homestead with time. We are both college educated. I completed my Master's program shortly after moving here. I have previously served on the Tree Board for the City of Norman, Oklahoma as part of the city's green initiative and to stay compliant with the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA initiative. This board was an advisory board and did not have regulatory authorities within the city.

Discuss applicants (Executive session for personnel matters)

Motion: To go into Executive session to discuss personnel matters at approximately 743PM. Made by Kim Watson, second by Zoe Christiansen, Passed unanimously.

Motion: To come out of Executive session to discuss personnel matters at 801PM. Made by Erica Zimmerman, second by Nik Khosla, Passed unanimously.

Motion: To recommend Celina Barton and Glen Weyant to the Selectboard for appointment to the PC for the remainder of the 2024 term. Made by Erica Zimmerman, second by Zoe Christiansen, Passed unanimously.

Discuss rules of procedure and officer elections (rules to be adopted and officers elected at 4/4 meeting)

Zach Sullivan provided the PC rules of procedure to the commission, and we discussed any necessary changes or possible updates. It was stated in Section 4.1 meeting minutes be filed with the town clerk within 5 days, Kim Watson had asked if there was opportunity to provide them in seven days. The Chair noted the requirement is written in the state statute and cannot be changed. We also discussed possible changes to Sections 3.6 and 6.1 but ultimately agreed these Sections best be left as written.

Discuss Housing Study

Zach Sullivan wanted to table discussion of the Housing Study until Commission member Clarice Cutler was present and we all agreed that would be in the best interest of the board. Tabled until next meeting.

Updates

- **Capital Improvement Committee** – No new updates.
- **Energy Committee (EC)** – no new update:
- **Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission** – Kim Watson, reported that she had read the March 12th, 2024 meeting minutes and noted that there is a Special Meeting today (3/21/2023) at 600PM, on Act 250. There will be an Act 250 Presentation by the Natural Resource Board. The next regular meeting will be on April 9, 2024. Anyone interested in CVPRC meetings can go at any time they are open to the public.

ZA/DRB Report

There will be a DRB meeting on April 2nd. 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). Permit report submitted. Two houses to be built, a deck, and a subdivision.

Other Business

Signpost survey instructions, QR Code and tiny URL are due on April 1st, 2024 from Erica Zimmerman with contributions from Zach Sullivan.

Review Minutes

The group reviewed the March 7, 2024, minutes.

Motion: To approve the March 7, 2024, minutes as amended. Made by Erica Zimmerman, second by Ben McCall, Passed unanimously.

Motion: To adjourn. Made by Kim Watson, second by Zoe Christiansen. Passed unanimously.

The meeting closed at 8:33 PM

Respectfully submitted by Kim Watson

Approved on: _____