

BRANDON PLANNING COMMISSION

April 2, 2012

Planning Commission Board Members Present: Anne Bransfield, Phyllis Aitchison, Marty Feldman, Linda Stewart

Others present: Charlene Bryant, Monica Erhart, Tina Wiles

The meeting was called to order at 7:06PM.

Minutes of March 19, 2012:

The approval of the minutes of March 19, 2012 was postponed to the next meeting.

Review Upcoming Trainings:

The upcoming training offerings were discussed, which included:

April 3rd – Spring Resilience Seminar in Montpelier

April 5th - On-line Training – During and After the Storm

April 11th - VLCT Planning and Zoning Forum

April 18th – Town Officers' Training

April 19th – Vermont Community Development Resilience

April 20th - After Irene – a Law and Policy Symposium at Vermont Law School

Zoning Activity Update – Tina Wiles

Tina Wiles will be emailing the Select Board the amendments to the BLUO that relate to the hearing to be held next Monday. Ms. Wiles did the final paperwork for the hazard mitigation grant. She currently has 8 applicants for review and is dealing with some violations. She has also been working on Segment 6 information. Ms. Wiles will be reviewing the new Fluvial Erosion regulations that have been recently instituted.

Zoning Ordinance Revision Timeline:

Anne Bransfield noted the timeline needs to be adjusted. A discussion was held concerning moving the timeline forward; with the revisions to be moved out two months. It was questioned if there are any significant changes to be made and it was noted the zoning districts will be a large project. There needs to be a review of the Industrial zones, as there used to be 7 or 8 and they are now down to 4 or 5. It was felt there was more nuance and more specifics when there were more zones to choose from. The High Density Multi-use section is fairly vague and should be reviewed further. It was the consensus of the Commission to leave the timeline at two months and if additional time is required, a change to the timeline can be made. Tina Wiles stated the amendments to the BLUO for floods and signs have been completed. It was questioned whether the Commission can incorporate new districts if they are not part of the Town Plan. Tina Wiles stated when the BLUO is complete, the Commission would ask for an amendment to the town plan. Ms. Wiles noted there might be some items in the ordinance that can be changed, which do not change the Town Plan. The Definition section could be set and the Variance section, Appeal section and Section 104 will not be changed. The Commission may want to review the industrial areas and the uses. The districts can then be reviewed and an Industrial Zone can be determined. The Commission requested Ms. Wiles provide them with the districts

Brandon Planning Commission

April 2, 2012

for their review. Ms. Wiles advised they will also need to develop the definition of a district and then define what they will be. They can then define the overlays, if required.

Mona Erhart – Staying Connected:

The VNRC will be present at the next Planning Commission meeting to discuss ways the town can help protect the wildlife. Monica Erhart of Staying Connected was present for a preliminary discussion. Ms. Erhart distributed a map of the various types of areas in the region and described how they relate to the wildlife. She noted there is some land that is already permanently conserved in the region. Ms. Erhart provided information on the areas that are the most important for the larger mammals, indicating there is an area where the animals commonly cross Route 7 just south of Otter Valley. It was questioned what an overlay would mean. Ms. Erhart stated an overlay could be used for site planning development, but may not necessary require regulations. Linda Stewart stated the Planning Commission may want to consider more areas. Ms. Erhart advised Staying Connected has mapped the East/West area and the town may want to consider other areas as well. It was questioned who could assist the Planning Commission if they want to protect the Otter Creek area. It was felt the Regional Planning Commission could be helpful in this area and Ms. Wiles also advised the USDA has been doing swampland easements for much of this property. Ms. Erhart stated the town can cover less area as well, of they may want to move some of the areas back from the road. Tina Wiles felt the Orton Foundation can also assist with conservation-type projects. Ms. Erhart stated the issue with mapping is that it is not uniform and she noted the reason that many of the crossing areas for the mammals are due to the fact there is no development in those areas. Ms. Erhart questioned how much capacity the Commission has for reviewing sub-plans and Ms. Wiles advised right now this is not specified and perhaps this type of review should be instituted. It was noted there could be a building envelope instituted in the conservation areas to conserve the green space. Ms. Erhart advised the towns of Hartland, Hartford and Enosburg have done work in this area. It was felt it would be a good idea to review some models from other towns. Ms. Erhart felt that some areas are going to be a challenge, as there is already some development in the areas. If the areas important to wildlife are not addressed, it may mean the wildlife could become fragmented or may be crossing in a dangerous area. It was noted a review process might work; using the conditional use criteria and a site assessment requirement. At the next meeting, the VNRC will be looking for what the town wants to do and how they can assist in writing the plan. Tina Wiles stated there is no jurisdiction regarding logging and she is unsure what the state's jurisdiction is with regard to this subject. Ms. Erhart stated the cross hatch areas noted on the map are the most critical and the largest threat to the wildlife. Ms. Erhart stated the most critical actions that would stop connection would be development and pavement, and the challenge is in the development going forward, rather than a change to existing conditions. She suggested Staying Connected could assist with some other options, if it is decided regulations are not an option. Ms. Erhart advised Staying Connected would be willing to provide a public presentation on this subject. They could also provide a habitat assessment for the property owners. The Planning Commission will review the information provided for discussion at the next meeting with representatives of the VNRC. Ms. Erhart stated VNRC has a deadline of the end of May for grant eligibility. The Commission thanked Ms. Erhart for her assistance.

Other Business as Needed:

There was no discussion held.

Public Comment Period:

There was no discussion held.

Schedule Future Meetings:

April 16, 2012

May 7, 2012

May 21, 2012

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Linda Stewart and seconded by Phyllis Aitchison to adjourn the meeting at 8:57PM.

The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted

Charlene Bryant

Recording Secretary