

FINAL
Brandon Planning Commission
December 2, 2013

Planning Commission Members Present: Marty Feldman, Jeff Guevin, Linda Stewart, Anne Bransfield, Tracy Wyman

Others present: Charlene Bryant, Tina Wiles, Kevin Thornton

Call to Order:

Anne Bransfield called the meeting to order at 7:02PM.

Approve Meeting Minutes for November 18, 2013:

A motion was made by Linda Stewart and seconded by Tracy Wyman to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2013 meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Public Comment Period

There was no discussion held.

Action Items:

1. Lenticular Truss Bridge Discussion

Kevin Thornton provided the Planning Commission information on the state's Truss Bridge Program. Professor Robert McCullough, who teaches historic preservation at UVM spearheads the state bridge program. Professor McCullough had previously presented information about lenticular truss bridges at a Brandon Select Board meeting. It was thought that Bob Read's property where a bridge presently exists would be a good location for this bridge. Blaine Cliver had also recommended a location below the lower falls. Professor McCullough's desire is to locate the bridges in downtowns for use as pedestrian bridges. Linda Stewart stated the VDAT people had made the suggestion for the bridge to be located down from the falls. Tina Wiles reported there is currently a bridge on Jane Murdock's property that needs to be taken down as it is in the flood plain. Mr. Thornton stated the intent would be to replace the bridge that Mr. Read currently has. The bridge is rated for 18,000 pounds, but the program is encouraging pedestrian bridges rather than vehicular bridges. Linda Stewart asked what it might cost for this type of bridge. Mr. Thornton stated rather than building abutments, the bridge would be built on a concrete pad and would reduce the cost. Mr. Thornton was not sure of the estimated cost, however, Professor McCullough is researching a grant to strip down the bridge and get it prepared for use. Leanne Tingay has also mentioned the possibility of grants, with a match from the town, which could be in the form of volunteer labor or use of heavy equipment. Mr. Guevin expressed concern with flooding, if a bridge is placed on concrete pads, however, replacing the current bridge would be a good idea. Mr. Read would have to initiate the application for the bridge program as it would be on private property. Mr. Thornton stated there are 20 bridges in storage and it is Professor McCullough's hope to have all of the bridges restored and placed. Mr. Thornton has encouraged Mr. Read to talk with Professor McCullough regarding the program. It was noted that River Management has indicated any replacement of the current bridge would have to be a pedestrian bridge. There was also discussion of the Churchill Bridge; however, this would require a vehicular bridge. Tina Wiles

noted Mr. Read has some conceptual ideas, however, changes cannot be done until the boundary line adjustments are completed.

2. Wildlife Corridor

The Planning Commission reviewed the latest draft of the proposed Wildlife Corridor.

Under Section x.00 - Authority and Purpose - fisher cat should be added as one of species included in the Corridor.

Under Section X.20B3(b) – Standards and Special Requirements for Development – there was a question about the percentage of tree cover relating to the development envelope. Jeff Guevin stated outside the critical crossing area, no more than 50% of a property’s trees can be cleared. There was a suggestion to change the figure to 25% outside the critical crossing area and 10% within the critical crossing area. Tina Wiles stated the criteria of a Forest Management plan should be in place. It was noted the intent of the section is to prevent clearing a large area of land and placing a structure in the middle, as wildlife will not cross in those types of clearings. It was noted that tree cover is important to the wildlife corridor. In looking at an image of Brandon, it would not be changing the existing development pattern. Mr. Wyman agrees with trying to preserve for the wildlife and habitat, but he recommended providing a developer leeway for their projects. Mr. Guevin agreed with having a certain amount of flexibility, but it would have to be at the DRB level for implementation. Mr. Guevin suggested coming up with a baseline and insert some P.U.D. language.

Under Section X.20C2 - There is concern that 300 feet is too long for a proposed driveway. It was noted the average driveway off Birch Hill Road would not be more than 100 feet. A recommendation was made to change the length to 100 feet or less.

The development of language for Pre-Development Clearing is needed. Tina Wiles will work on language for this section.

With regard to Temporary Structure – a suggestion was made to add the wording “no more than” six months. Tina Wiles stated “temporary” should be a definitive time frame. This item will be redefined.

3. Municipal Planning Grant

Anne Bransfield reported Brandon has been awarded a Municipal Planning Grant (MPG) in the amount of \$6,500.00. Ms. Bransfield stated the project originally applied for was the Brandon Based Code Comprehensive Planning & Zoning Update and the state has requested a change to the project title to be Public Outreach for a Comprehensive Town Plan Update. The second change they requested relates to what the project accomplishes. The original submission stated, “The project includes the completion of a smart/form-based code zoning bylaw update, implementing flood resilience, complete and safe streets, healthy community design with related Town Plan revisions and Brandon’s first capital plan”. A request has been made to change the project accomplishment wording to, “Public outreach leading to draft Town Plan language that addresses among other issues; flood resilience, complete and safe streets, healthy community design and capital improvements”. The state is looking at this as a Town Plan update and there has been no indication of a change to the work plan. It is suggested to change the language as recommended in order to obtain the MPG. It was noted the grant cannot be used for prior invoices relating to the Form Base Code project. It was the consensus of the Planning Commission to make the changes and request Robin Bennett to sign the grant agreement as the town’s designated official.

A motion was made by Anne Bransfield and seconded by Linda Stewart to authorize the changes to the language of the MPG application as requested by the grant administrator. **The motion passed unanimously.**

4. Draft Sidewalk and Merchandise Display Ordinance

The Planning Commission will continue discussion with the Brandon Chamber concerning the changes to the Sidewalk and Merchandise Display ordinance. Tina Wiles will continue to work on revisions as discussed with the Chamber representatives. The revised draft will be reviewed by the Planning Commission, followed by additional discussion with the representatives from the Chamber. Tina Wiles stated there was discussion of transferring some of the language into the Facility Use policy. She will need to determine whether this policy had been initially approved by the Select Board. It was recommended the Planning Commission meet with the Chamber again in January.

Anne Bransfield hopes to have more information on the Form Base Code project at the next Planning Commission meeting.

Ms. Bransfield stated there has been a recent article released concerning a state-funded effort to bring passenger rail service from Burlington to Rutland. It was suggested the Planning Commission should begin discussions about opportunities for the future relating to the passenger rail service that will run through Brandon.

Other Business as Needed:

There was no discussion held.

Next Meetings:

December 16th – Regular Planning Commission Meeting
January 6th – Regular Planning Commission Meeting

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Linda Stewart and seconded by Anne Bransfield to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 8:11PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary