

FINAL
Brandon Planning Commission
September 2, 2014

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

Others present: Laura MacLachlan, Bill Moore, Dave Atherton, Gary Meffe

Call to Order:

Anne Bransfield called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

Approval of Minutes: August 4, 2014

A motion was made by Anne Bransfield and seconded by Jeff Guevin to approve the minutes of the August 4, 2014 Planning Commission meeting, as amended. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Under Municipal Planning Grant and Town Plan Update, paragraph 3 was corrected to read: The Planning Commission will hire individuals to take care of sections of the Town Plan, as needed. This information will be sent to the VPA website, the NNCAPA website, to all consultants listed on the ACCD MPG webpage, as well as to every consultant the PC has worked with or knows. The contracts will be essentially the same as the one used to hire the previous consultant. Paragraph 4 under the same section was eliminated.

In the last sentence under Public Comment, change the word warned to advertise.

Public Comment Period

. *Laura MacLachlan – Vermont Energy Education Program*

Laura MacLachlan provided information on Vermont Energy Education Program; noting that she provides presentations to schools, but is also interested in promoting community outreach. It was suggested events could be done in town that revolve around energy savings. She suggested doing a workshop to provide information to people about energy saving steps they can do and it was suggested the local hardware stores could possibly be involved in this effort. Button-Up Day, scheduled for November 1st, is an effort to promote getting homes ready for winter. Gary Meffe advised that Efficiency Vermont has energy savings kits and these could potentially be offered when hosting an event. Mr. Meffe stated a program had been done several years ago that included wrapping water heaters, insulating pipes and providing a rough energy audit of several homes in the area. People were then encouraged to obtain an energy audit directly from Efficiency Vermont. Ms. MacLachlan stated the staff of Vermont Energy Education is slightly trained to do mini energy audits and she can get in touch with Neighbor Works and

Efficiency Vermont to see if they will assist in supporting this type of project. Mr. Meffe stated the past event had a group of volunteers and it was advertised in the paper. There were 100+ homes done at that time. Mr. Meffe stated independent of this subject, but in parallel, Sun Common, a solar energy group, is going to be mounting a push for solar power in Brandon. They have provided a presentation to the Chamber of Commerce and will be having an event to introduce solar to people in Brandon. He stated all efforts could potentially be under the auspices of an Energy Program. Ms. MacLachlan stated Sun Common's approach is to make this type of energy affordable. Dave Atherton has had discussions about trying to find places in town to support this type of effort. Mr. Meffe stated there could be groups of homes that could buy into the program. Ms. MacLachlan also suggested the possibility of hosting an Energy Fair. Anne Bransfield stated as part of the Town Plan update, there was discussion of having an Energy Day. Ms. MacLachlan will be in contact with Sun Commons to discuss how the two programs could coordinate in opening this effort up to a greater population. It was suggested the timeline for this event be prior to the November 1st Button Up Day. Anne Bransfield requested Ms. MacLachlan email her additional information.

. *Economic Development Discussion with Bill Moore, Recreation Director*

Bill Moore has had a conversation with Laura MacLauchlan about energy events. Dave Atherton suggested asking Aubuchon's and Brandon Lumber if they would be willing to provide discounts on energy savings items to offer in conjunction with Button Up Day. Mr. Moore thought it is a good idea and suggested moving quickly to make this happen. It was recommended to have Ms. MacLachlan as part of the Energy event that the Planning Commission is scheduling. Mr. Moore suggested the Planning Commission ask the Chamber if they could add a booth during the Leaf People event. Mr. Moore also suggested working with the schools on this event and reaching out to the PTO for their involvement. With October being National Planning Month, the Planning Commission is also considering scheduling an event during World Town Planning Day in October with the suggestion of presenting a TED-Talk Planning video in the Town Hall. Dave Atherton suggested developing a flyer to provide information on cutting energy costs.

Marty Feldman noted there is a Brandon Area Economic Development Committee and it is hoped that Mr. Moore is invited to attend those meetings. Mr. Moore confirmed he has been in contact with Alyssa Zollman. It was noted that several years ago an Economic Development Committee had been appointed by the Select Board. They meet once a month to discuss ideas for economic development.

Anne Bransfield questioned the status of the mountain bike map. Bill Moore advised he will need to obtain more information about the trails with the use of a GPS. Ms. Bransfield noted there could potentially be a grant written to assist in this effort. Tracy Wyman stated there will need to be permission obtained to go over all the properties. Mr. Moore stated there have been some issues with Hawk Hill as far as what is allowed. He noted it would be good to map out this information, but obtaining permissions will be the initial action. Ms. Bransfield stated there was discussion of getting information from several people that have a GPS to rough out a map for the mountain bike community to provide comments. The map could then be finalized

by the Regional Planning Commission. Tracy Wyman stated it would be good to be able to use the trails as cross-country ski trails, as there is nothing for cross country skiing now in the area and this would be a good draw for the town. Mr. Wyman stated Middlebury has a Snowmobile Club and they have always taken care of grooming trails as far south as Chittenden. Individuals can become a member of a club in other towns, as it is a requirement to belong to a club in order to join VAST. Mr. Moore has been considering creating a club membership in Brandon to allow people to belong to VAST. Mr. Wyman volunteered to assist Mr. Moore with this effort as he has worked with VAST in the past. Mr. Wyman noted permission would also have to be obtained to use machinery to do trail maintenance.

Mr. Moore suggested Brandon could possibly host a Planning Workshop. Anne Bransfield stated there was a Historic Preservation Workshop done a few years ago and perhaps this one could be a Recreation or Healthy Community design. Mr. Moore noted Stephanie Jerome has recommended outreach be done for fly-fishing on the Neshobe River as a viable option.

Ms. Bransfield stated the Planning Commission is in the process of updating the Town Plan and they would like to partner with Mr. Moore on the Economic Development section. Mr. Moore will be meeting with Darren Winham, an economic development consultant who has been hired by the town to develop an economic development plan. Some of his focus will be on the Elnicki building and the old school. Mr. Moore noted Mr. Winham expressed interest in meeting with the Planning Commission.

. Temporary Zoning Administrator Discussion

Dave Atherton volunteered to be the temporary Zoning Administrator to handle outstanding permits, but will not be able to track down violations. He will ask Elaine Smith to contact him when an application comes into the Town Office and his work will be a limited number of hours, but he will be accessible by phone. There are four or five pending applications that need to be moved forward. Mr. Atherton stated the Select Board has not had an opportunity to determine what to do with the position. There is a concern as to how much time the Zoning Administrator needs. Mr. Atherton does not see the need for a full-time Zoning Administrator, as there are not major subdivisions or development happening right now. There was discussion of combining the Zoning Administrator with Code Enforcement and the Health Officer work. There was a time when the positions were combined. Anne Bransfield has not received any information about the vacancy and the Planning Commission is unaware of where the position stands. Mr. Atherton stated with a town of this size; he sees this as more of a two-day per week position. Linda Stewart stated there are a lot of violations that have fallen by the wayside. Mr. Atherton stated if there is a permit or two submitted it leaves plenty of time for enforcing violations. Ms. Stewart noted the former Zoning Administrator was doing FEMA work as well and drafting documents for the Planning Commission such as the BLUO, in addition to the Zoning Administrator position. Anne Bransfield stated the Planning Commission has a position description that outlines a Zoning Administrator/Planning Commission secretary. Ms. Bransfield stated there was an ad that was ready to run, but the Select Board Chair had asked the

Commission to hold off. Ms. Bransfield thanked Mr. Atherton for offering to be the interim Zoning Administrator.

A motion was made by Anne Bransfield and seconded by Linda Stewart to accept the volunteer services of Dave Atherton as the Interim Zoning Administrator. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Dave Atherton will contact the applicants of the pending applications and begin work on them. Anne Bransfield will contact the Town Manager and the Select Board Chair regarding the interim Zoning Administrator appointment. Mr. Atherton will recommend to the Select Board that the permanent position be filled as soon as possible. Linda Stewart noted the former Zoning Administrator had recommended a new set of fees for permits, but this was not moved forward.

. *Town Plan Update Work Plan and Timeline Revision*

Anne Bransfield has spoken with Faith Inglesrud about the Municipal Planning Grant (MPG). The Planning Commission has a plan for the MPG, but currently does not have a consultant. There was discussion of hiring out different parts of the work that need to be done, though Ms. Inglesrud has advised it is a more complicated process and detailed documentation will need to be maintained. There has been discussion of working with a consultant to do the census data update that the Regional Planning Commission is requiring. Ms. Bransfield has talked with Danielle Fitzco about repurposing the \$500.00 Tree Canopy grant to do outreach, rather than for use on the Wildlife Corridor and it was noted this can be done. Ms. Bransfield will submit a description change to the agency. Dave Atherton asked if someone from the Rutland Region Planning Commission could find an intern to assist in this effort. Anne Bransfield will talk with Ed Bove about what the Regional Commission might contribute. It was thought they could potentially assist with the census data and the maps. It was noted the consultant request does not need to be put out to bid, as long as the Planning Commission can find a qualified person to do the work. Ms. Bransfield advised there will be a Town Forest Summit in Barre on September 27th. It was suggested to ask Gary Meffe and Laura MacLachlan if they would take charge of the Energy Summit and schedule it for the first week of October.

Dave Atherton reported the Regional Planning Commission has not met since June and the next meeting will be September 15th. Anne Bransfield suggested Dave Atherton and she stay in touch. She will also talk to Ed Bove to see if there is any help the Planning Commission can get from the Regional Commission. Dave Atherton stated the Regional Planning Commission's concern is the outdated statistics the town has, which can affect the process of applying for grants. With regard to the revision timeline, it was noted there will be continued discussion at a subsequent meeting. It was suggested that Ms. MacLachlan contact Devon Fuller regarding the Energy Committee that potentially exists.

Other Business as Needed:

There was no other business discussed.

Next Meetings:

September 15th

October 6th

October 20th

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Linda Stewart and seconded by Jeff Guevin to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 8:34PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary