

**Brandon Planning Commission Meeting
June 4, 2018**

Board Members Present: Stephanie Jerome, Ethan Nelson, Michael Shank

Board Members Absent: Lisa Rovi, Bill Mills

Also in Attendance: Anna Scheck – Zoning Administrator, Robert Black, Larry Rowe

1. Call to order

Stephanie Jerome, Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:08PM.

2. Agenda Approval

A motion was made by Michael Shank to approve the agenda as amended. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Move Energy Plan Update immediately following the Consent Agenda

3. Consent Agenda

a. Approve Planning Commission Hearing Minutes – May 7, 2018

A motion was made by Michael Shank to approve the Planning Commission hearing minutes of May 7, 2018. **The motion passed unanimously.**

b. Approve Planning Commission Meeting Minutes – May 7, 2018

A motion was made by Michael Shank to approve the Planning Commission meeting minutes of May 7, 2018. **The motion passed unanimously.**

5. Energy Plan Update

Stephanie Jerome reported the Select Board has approved an Energy Committee with a maximum of five members and appointed Michael Shank, Lowell Rasmussen, Edna Sutton, Daniel Schmitz and Jack Schneider. The Town Manager will provide the Planning Commission Chair all letters of interest received. Dave Atherton provided the Planning Commission energy information he received. Ms. Jerome forwarded this information, as well as information and a map of potential solar sites she received from a seminar that she attended to Mr. Shank for the Energy Committee's use. A first draft of an Energy Plan was completed by the RRPC and edits have been done on this document. Michael Shank will be the lead for the Energy Committee in working on an Energy Plan for the Town.

Larry Rowe of Sudbury was present to provide information regarding Sudbury's Energy Plan process. Mr. Rowe advised Sudbury was a pilot town with regard to the development of an Energy Plan and had been provided assistance of a planner by the State. Mr. Rowe stated the maps are an important feature and assist in determining the preferred solar sites. The Town had to decide what to include on the maps and the key item in determining the sites were the local constraints. Prior to the development of a Plan, a 2-megawatt project had been located on Route 30, as well as another 500-kilowatt project. Mr. Rowe noted Sudbury began the process by identifying the local constraints. Barbara Noyes-Pulling of the RRPC assisted with drafting Sudbury's Energy Plan with the first version including local constraints and current use values; however, the current use values were subsequently removed. In their plan, they note conservation, conserved protected lands and habitat blocks within the wildlife area. They overlaid that

map with the solar potential, as there is limited areas in Sudbury for wind or hydro potential. One key item was a 3-phase power line that runs up Route 30 and near the Sawyer-Needham Road. They wanted to be sure the developers are offered an optimal number of sites, but where they cannot be seen. Sites were found that are away from the roads and the Town approached landowners to determine if they would like to be considered as preferred sites. This does not obligate the landowners, but provides the developers' opportunities to talk with landowners about potential projects. Mr. Rowe noted the Brandon needs to locate enough sites to meet the condition of the State's quota. Mr. Rowe reviewed the maps that provided information on Sudbury's preferred sites. There were buildings as well as properties determined as preferred structures that included barns and town buildings. Mr. Rowe noted the Town would need demonstrate to the State that it is leading the energy effort. Recently, Sudbury has been advised that there are two developers reviewing sites in their town for two 500-kilowatt projects. Sudbury's Planning Commission will be discussing the applications for these projects. Sudbury's Energy Plan was approved about a month ago. Mr. Rowe noted Brandon needs to provide sites that are optimal; otherwise, the State will not approve the Plan. Michael Shank would like Mr. Rowe to provide a presentation to the Energy Committee regarding Sudbury's Energy Plan development. Mr. Rowe stated the Planning Commission will need to decide the sites, how the plan will be implemented and assure the town is leading by example. Mr. Rowe noted a study was done in Sudbury that indicated they had limited wind potential. There was conservation on the high peaks so there is local constraint. Brandon will have to review areas such as the wet lands, nature conservancy, agriculture protection, Vermont Land Trust, critical habitats and archeological sites so that preferred sites are not indicated in areas that would not qualify. In Sudbury, the constraints were placed on the solar map to allow for selecting the optimal sites that were fair to the developer, but not adverse to the residents. They had developed an Energy Committee that was charged with making sure the plan was implemented. The entire process took them over a year to complete. Mr. Rowe advised the formatting of the maps were key and Steve Schilds of the RRPC did much work. It is hoped by June 2019; Brandon will have an Energy Plan implemented. Mr. Shank will discuss the organization of the initial meeting of the Energy Committee with the Town Manager.

Stephanie Jerome attended a meeting on planning/zoning that included a presentation by Efficiency Vermont. Ms. Jerome thought the idea of conservation and homeowner conservation should be part of the Energy Plan. Anna Scheck reported this information is provided when applications are submitted for a permit. Michael Shank suggested workshops could be offered to the public on the various energy efficiencies available.

Robert Black thanked the Planning Commission for the good work they are doing. He advised that after Irene, there was a good Watershed Event offered and many people attended. He thought energy education is key. The timeliness of energy is good and conservation efficiency is good, but energy education is also key. Mr. Black noted Edna Sutton would be a very good resource for the Energy Committee. Mr. Black offered his assistance with regard to community organization. Mike Shank will contact the newly appointed Energy Committee members to choose a day for the initial meeting of the committee.

4. Zoning Administrator Report

Anna Scheck provided copies of the permits issued this month. The DRB met on May 30th regarding a permit for a conditional use for a residential use in the central business district. The Mobil Station was contacted regarding the status of their permits, as their permits have expired and they will have to reapply. The changes to the BLUO were sent to the Select Board and hearings were set for June 25th and July 23rd. Once the Select Board has the second hearing, they can approve the changes at the next Board meeting with the changes to be effective within 21 days. Ms. Scheck talked to Barbara Noyes-Pulling of the RRPC about the flood hazard and river corridor changes. Model policies were provided for review and Ms. Scheck advised it is important these changes happen or the Town will lose the federal ERAF funding. The Planning Commission will have further discussion with Ms. Noyes-Pulling regarding the flood hazard and river corridor changes. Ms. Scheck stated the Town has strong flood hazard regulations, but it may require a change in the maps. The river corridor may be more involved as a lot has changed in this area

and the Town only had an interim River Corridor section. There will need to be a new section and maps developed. Stephanie Jerome will review the current BLUO information regarding these two sections. The DRB had a hearing for the Neshobe River Winery Act 250 application and the findings will be sent to Act 250. Michael Shank asked if someone could request a special road sign if there are particular concerns in an area. Anna Scheck suggested contacting Daryl Burlett regarding this type of request.

6. Old/New Business

Stephanie Jerome received information concerning the RRPC budget and noted it mandates that the Regional Commission work with the Rutland Region Chamber of Commerce and REDC. Ms. Jerome will discuss the potential for the RRPC to also work with the Brandon Chamber of Commerce.

Michael Shank asked if it is a role of the Planning Commission to move forward with the installation of an electric charging station in Town. Daryl Burlett had indicated the Town is looking into a grant for the new town parking lot that would include the installation of a charging station. It was suggested Mr. Shank contact Mr. Burlett regarding this subject. Mr. Shank will check with GMP and Mr. Burlett.

Stephanie Jerome noted for future planning, the Commission's priorities are the completion of an Energy Plan, updating the river corridor and flood hazard regulations, updating the BLUO with regard to conditional uses and off-street parking. Anna Scheck advised that with a project the size of the Aubuchon building, parking spaces should be designated for the residential units. There needs to be parking indicated in a lease, but there is question of where the parking will be and who will enforce it. Ms. Scheck noted there was also discussion of abandoned properties and a nuisance ordinance. Ms. Scheck stated the reason this came up was that there were several properties that had been abandoned after Irene and buildings that are falling down. There was also discussion regarding accessory structures that has conflicting comments in the ordinance in areas where they are addressed. Ms. Jerome requested Ms. Scheck provide the Planning Commission with any other issues in the ordinance that she would like the Planning Commission to review.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Monday, July 2, 2018 at 6PM – Brandon Ton Hall – Planning Commission Meeting

Monday, August 6, 2018 at 6PM – Brandon Town Hall – Planning Commission Meeting

8. Adjournment

The Committee Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary