

**Brandon Planning Commission Meeting
December 3, 2018**

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

Board Members Absent: Bill Mills

Also in Attendance: Jeff Biasuzzi – Zoning Administrator, Doug Bailey, Dave Atherton

1. Call to order

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

2. Agenda Approval

A motion was made by Ethan Nelson to approve the agenda. **The motion passed unanimously.**

3. Consent Agenda

a. Approve Planning Commission Meeting Minutes – November 5, 2018

A motion was made by Ethan Nelson to approve the Planning Commission meeting minutes of November 5, 2018. **The motion passed unanimously.**

4. Zoning Administrator's Report

Jeff Biasuzzi provided a written report. Mr. Biasuzzi advised the Town of Pittsford is going through the adoption process for changes to their zoning regulations and has notified the abutting towns of the public hearing to be held on December 13th in the event a town would like representation at the hearing. The change proposed is to change the two main corridors, Route 7 and Route 3 from Rural Commercial to Commercial and it was voted to extend the Commercial zoning to the Brandon town line. Mr. Biasuzzi noted there is a lot of rural property that is undevelopable due to wetlands, in the flood plain or are working farms. The developable part to the Brandon town line is limited for commercial development. Mr. Biasuzzi reported there has been an appeal filed on a DRB decision regarding Midway Oil. There is also an application to be filed for a change in use from a single-family residence to a multi-family dwelling on Franklin Street. Mr. Biasuzzi stated the zoning district indicates ¼ acre per dwelling unit, which he interprets as new construction. This is a non-conforming structure on a non-conforming lot that has been grandfathered in. Mr. Biasuzzi requested the Planning Committee's input. Ethan Nelson stated there is a market for more affordable housing in the area. Mr. Biasuzzi stated residential use indicates single or multi-use, though the property is a pre-zoning, non-conforming structure. Mr. Biasuzzi noted concern with parking, as there are no off-street parking regulations in the BLUO and asked the Planning Commission to consider off-street parking in their future updates to the plan. Mr. Biasuzzi stated right now off-street parking is acceptable, but there should perhaps be consideration to some future amendments. Mr. Biasuzzi suggested the Committee review Castleton's off-street parking regulations. Lisa Rovi volunteered to review the Castleton zoning. Mr. Biasuzzi stated if a permit is granted, the Zoning Administrator would work with the owner regarding the number of off-street parking spaces. Mr. Biasuzzi reported there is a planning grant that will be available and perhaps this subject could potentially qualify for the grant. There is a pre-application webinar scheduled for December 31st, with the application due in January. Michael Shank and Stephanie Jerome will participate in the pre-application webinar that will provide the Planning Commission eligibility to apply for the grant. Mr. Biasuzzi stated there is a trend towards renting smaller properties. Mr. Biasuzzi advised he does not see an issue for denying the application from his interpretation for a change from single-family to multi-dwelling. The Committee Chair will review the application and provide feedback to the Zoning Administrator. Ms. Jerome

requested the Zoning Administrator look into the sign that remains on a building for a business that does not exist.

5. Conti Solar Update

Dave Atherton reported Conti Solar would not be bringing their project to Vermont. Mr. Atherton is unsure why the project was pulled. He noted the State Historic department had filed to intervene because there were three archeological sites.

Dave Atherton reported the Davenport project, formerly Ranger Solar, have been very good in working with the Town. They just completed their project in Ludlow and were at the recent RRPC meeting to discuss the Brandon project. Mr. Atherton noted the project has been downscaled from 22 to 15 megawatts to help the animal corridor and they have addressed the river corridor and the wetlands. The Town will be receiving some financial assistance from this project that will go into the Revolving Loan Fund to give back to the community. Davenport will maintain the road and improve the infrastructure. It is anticipated their start date will be in 2020, with the project located at the end of Carver Street on the West side of the road. Michael Shank requested some specific bullet points to enable him to write an article for the Reporter and Addison Independent on the type of project that works for the Town. Mr. Atherton stated Davenport has attended three separate Select Board meetings and the communication has been very good. Mr. Atherton advised Green Lantern has also been another good project that has worked well with the Town. Doug Bailey stated the Davenport location is an area that cannot be seen and also noted there has been very good in communication with the Town. Mr. Atherton stated the Town has to determine where to naturally progress and noted this is the best use for this property. Mr. Atherton advised the Town recommended Conti three different alternative sites to contact; however, the PUC was not in favor of a change.

6. Energy Plan Update

Michael Shank noted the Energy Plan is about 80 to 90% complete and the Energy Committee hopes to have a rough draft to the Planning Commission soon. There is a goal to submit the Energy Plan to the Select Board for approval by April. Mr. Shank reported the Energy Committee, in conjunction with Efficiency Vermont, would be hosting a public workshop on zero energy homes and cold climate heat pumps on January 12th. There was a discussion of a more on-site tutorial visit at a later date, with potential town sites being used. The Committee will be scheduling a presentation by Paul Markowitz of Vermont Energy Investment Corporation and Efficiency Vermont on energy committees and their benefits. Jeff Biasuzzi suggested extending invitations to other towns to attend the workshops. Another workshop to be scheduled in the spring with a presentation by Tesla.

7. RRPC Update

Michael Shank noted that he did not attend the recent RRPC meeting. The Town Manager attended only the Davenport Solar portion of the meeting.

8. Town Plan Revisions

Stephanie Jerome noted the Town Manager had suggested the Planning Commission begin review of the Town Plan to begin updating the Plan. It was last approved in 2016 and Brandon is currently on the five-year renewal cycle. Ms. Jerome suggested a subsection be reviewed at each meeting. Ms. Jerome requested the Planning Commission members read the Overview section for discussion at the next meeting and a work plan will be developed at that time. Ms. Jerome noted there are many errors in the current Plan and advised she has received some suggested changes from Ed Bove of the RRPC. Jeff Biasuzzi advised the adoption process for a town plan varies from the zoning ordinance adoption process. Mr. Biasuzzi stated there are twelve criteria for a town plan and is the document that dictates the zoning.

Dave Atherton noted many people outside the town view this document and suggested the update include more visuals. Mr. Biasuzzi suggested reviewing Hubbardton's town plan as an example plan. Mr. Biasuzzi advised there are planning grants available to assist in this effort.

9. BLUO Definitions Update

Ethan Nelson has received information from the Zoning Administrator and has talked with Rick Oberkirch, Regional Permit Specialist for the VT Department of Environmental Conservation. Mr. Oberkirch will provide Mr. Nelson the State definitions and Mr. Nelson will extract information and develop draft definitions for the BLUO for the Committee's review.

10. BLUO Accessory Structures Update

Stephanie Jerome requested the Zoning Administrator review the section of the BLUO on accessory structures, as the former Zoning Administrator had indicated there were some issues with this section. Jeff Biasuzzi advised there is conflicting information in the BLUO as it indicates an exempt structure is 100 square feet in one section, but 80 square feet in another section. Mr. Biasuzzi thought both dimensions are too small. He also noted that setbacks are an issue and the Planning Commission may want to consider a different setback. Mr. Biasuzzi will review this section further and provide input to the Planning Commission.

11. Old/New Business

There was no discussion held.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Monday, January 7, 2018 at 6:00PM – Brandon Town Office – Planning Commission Meeting

13. Adjournment

The Committee Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:23PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary