

**Brandon Planning Commission Meeting**  
**May 4, 2020**

**Board Members Present:** Michael Shank, Stephanie Jerome, Lowell Rasmussen, Ralph Ethier, Allie Walter, Allie Breyer

**Board Members Absent:** Bill Mills

**1. Call to order**

Michael Shank, Interim Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:01PM.

**2. Agenda Approval**

A motion was made by Stephanie Jerome to approve the agenda. **The motion passed.**

**3. Approve Meeting Minutes – March 16, 2020**

A motion was made by Stephanie Jerome to approve the Planning Commission minutes of March 16, 2020 as presented. **The motion passed.**

Michael Shank noted the Select Board extended the Planning Commission to 7 members. Introductions of the new Commission members were made. Allie Walter has been active on the DBA and Greenways Committee. She is interested in moving Brandon forward in using outdoor spaces and hopes that her role will assist the Planning Commission and giving a different perspective and add a new voice. Allie Breyer noted she has a master's degree in planning and has an interest in servicing the community in local planning. She has worked as a land use planner. Ms. Breyer looks forward to giving back to Brandon. Ralph Ethier has been a resident of Brandon for 48 years and wants to do something for the community. He has interest in the Planning Commission as he has done some development and owns some apartment buildings. Stephanie Jerome stated someone with a long-term perspective of the Town will be very helpful.

**4. Elect Chair and Vice-Chair**

Michael Shank stated following the March vote each year there is a need to elect a chair and vice-chair of the Committee. It was not done at the last meeting due the absence of some members. Stephanie Jerome noted she would be interested in serving as vice-chair. Due to her work in Montpelier, she would not be available to serve as chair. Lowell Rasmussen noted he has been on the Planning Commission for a year and appreciates Michael Shank's organizational skills. Mr. Shank indicated he would be agreeable to chair the Committee if no one else had a strong passion for being the chair. Mr. Shank noted he saw the Energy Plan through and wants to assist with the River Corridor getting completed and approved. The work of the Planning Commission includes assuring the Land Use Ordinance and Town Plan are relevant to 2020 and update as required. Some of the work the Planning Commission does is in concert with the Rutland Regional Planning Commission.

**. Chair Election**

A motion was made by Lowell Rasmussen to appoint Michael Shank as the Chair of the Brandon Planning Commission. **The motion passed unanimously.**

**. Vice-Chair Election**

A motion was made by Lowell Rasmussen to appoint Stephanie Jerome as the Vice-Chair of the Brandon Planning Commission. **The motion passed unanimously.**

## 5. Zoning Administrator Report

There was no discussion held.

## 6. River Corridors Update

Michael Shank reported the Planning Commission held its public hearing on the River Corridors. Mr. Shank confirmed that Allie Walter and Ralph Ethier received the update and will provide the update to Allie Breyer. Jeff Biasuzzi will provide Allie Breyer a copy of the Brandon Land Use Ordinance and the Town Plan. Mr. Shank stated the Commission has stayed updated on this subject with the various flood hazard and river corridor updates that the Town required in order to obtain full reimbursement from the State and Federal governments when there is a disaster. With the Plan updated, the Town will obtain the most reimbursement possible. Mr. Shank advised the main update is the State's request for a 50-foot buffer. For existing structures, the State is not requiring removal; the new ordinance would be for new structures that encroach on the river corridor. The Select Board has the information to move forward with their public hearings, but they prefer to do the hearings in person so they will happen closer to June or July. There is a window that is required between the Planning Commission and the Select Board hearings. Mr. Shank has not heard of any concerns or questions regarding the update and the indication from the Planning Commission's public hearing was that there were not issues. A PowerPoint presentation was developed for the hearings. It was noted the PowerPoint was informative and straight forward. Mr. Ethier suggested some do's and don'ts could be added to the presentation.

## 7. Old/New Business

Stephanie Jerome reported the Legislature is working at home now and all of the bills have been put on hold except those that relate to the COVID-19 crisis. She has been spending the majority of time helping people get their unemployment insurance. The Act 250 legislation has been put on hold and some pieces of the bill, specifically the grants for renovating village homes are good innovative policies. It is hoping to get beyond the COVID-19 bills and begin work again in August on the Act 250 bill. Michael Shank reported during the Energy Committee meeting, there was discussion of the July 11<sup>th</sup> EV Festival. Mr. Shank asked Ms. Jerome where the Town stands on their events over the summer. Ms. Jerome stated the summer museum is closed for the entire season. She is seeing many things being shut down for the summer, which is what was expected, but she was not sure of what the Town is doing. Ms. Jerome reported she received an email from VTel, a phone and internet provider, offering free Wi-Fi routers to towns. The Town now has the free router set up at the town office that provides Wi-Fi to the downtown. She has also been working with Bill Moore and the Rutland Regional Planning Commission on a grant for a broadband study for the area, as the northern part of Rutland County has many blank spots. The Federal government is going to be putting money into broadband. The State needs rural broadband as it is making a big divide in education currently and it is hoped this will move the project forward faster. Mr. Shank noted there are some parts of Vermont that are completely off-line.

## 8. Date of Next Meeting

Next meeting – June 1, 2020 at 6:00PM via Zoom Meeting.

## 9. Adjournment

A motion was made by Stephanie Jerome to adjourn the meeting at 6:28PM. **The motion passed.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant  
Recording Secretary