

**Brandon Planning Commission Special Meeting - Draft
November 7, 2022**

Board Members Present: Jack Schneider, Bill Mills, Cecil Reniche-Smith, Bob Foley

Others Present on Zoom: Jeff Biasuzzi

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 6:04PM by Bill Mills – Vice-Chair.

2. Agenda Approval

A motion was made by Bob Foley to approve the agenda. **The motion passed unanimously.**

3. Approve Meeting Minutes – September 6, 2022 and October 3, 2022

A motion was made by Jack Schneider to approve the minutes of the September 6, 2022 Planning Commission meeting. **The motion passed with one abstention – Cecil Reniche-Smith.**

A motion was made by Cecil Reniche-Smith to approve the minutes of the October 3, 2022 Planning Commission meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

4. Zoning Administrator Report

Jeff Biasuzzi reported there was not much in the way of zoning permits, with a couple of applications, but nothing in terms of new items. The DRB will have a busy November with three hearings this month for a change of use, setback waiver request and the Brandon Library. The Library has approval for a \$1.2 million renovation and all is conditional use. The requests for zoning compliance are slowing down. There are some violations that Mr. Biasuzzi will be getting involved with. The cannabis inquiries have also slowed down this month.

5. Energy Committee (BEC) Report

Jack Schneider reported the BEC just met prior to this meeting. There are four working groups: energy generation, transportation, conservation, and education. The conservation group has a DIY event this Saturday at the Town Hall. There are 53 people registered for the event that is a free event for all townspeople as a result of a grant received. There will be presentations from Energy Vermont, BROCC and Neighborworks. There will be \$65 worth of materials for energy efficiency provided to participants. The Town Manager has requested the BEC do research for a new energy-efficient municipal garage that would have solar on the roof and other energy-efficient items. The BEC also received a grant to buy two electric bikes for people to borrow. The Brandon Library will be handling the lending process. The next Davenport event is scheduled for July 8th and SolarFest will be scheduled for July 15th and 16th. Jack Schneider has been tasked with doing the BEC annual report for the Town Report. It was noted that the Planning Commission will also need to submit a report and the Chairperson of the group usually submits the report. Bill Mills noted he received an email from Seth Hopkins requesting a report from the Planning Commission.

6. Election of Officers

Bill Mills stated the Chair position involves organizing and guiding the Committee, with the Committee members willing to assist. It was noted that Sue Gage is the alternate for the Planning Commission when an additional person is needed for a quorum.

A motion was made by Jack Schneider to appoint Cecil Reniche-Smith as the Chair and Bob Foley as Vice-Chair of the Planning Commission. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Bill Mills will provide Ms. Reniche-Smith with the information on the Commission.

7. BLUO Review

Bob Foley advised he completed the definitions that he was tasked with doing. Bill Mills requested Mr. Foley email the definitions to him for addition to the other definitions that have been done. Mr. Mills stated the Commission reviewed the BLUO and a list of words were compiled needing definitions. Jeff Biasuzzi advised West Rutland is going to be warning their Zoning regulations that took many hours of staff time and work with the RRPC and Agency of Natural Resources. A grant was received for the VLCT attorneys to vet the document. Mr. Biasuzzi noted there were not changes to the definitions and the document can be viewed on their website, westrutland@vt.org as a source for definitions.

Mr. Biasuzzi advised Brandon has applied for a Zoning Modernization grant with the emphasis on the grant being for updating favorable situations for housing stock. He noted one thing in the BLUO that needs updating is accessory dwelling units as the current version is weak and suggested clarifying and reorganizing this section. In the BLUO, there is a section for neighborhood residential. If one wants to convert to multi-family use, it requires ¼ acre per unit which prevents large homes from changing to multi-family. Mr. Biasuzzi noted he could provide information to the Commission on recommendations. Mr. Biasuzzi stated the rule is designed to prohibit breaking up a house and noted Section 303.f is a limiting section and 304.h refers to the acre for the dwelling unit. Accessory dwelling units are limited under State statute and cannot be more than a percentage of the minor structure. In Brandon, not more than 30% of the main residential structure is allowed. Once one exceeds the qualifications for the State, the local government rules apply to dwelling units. Jack Schneider suggested the Planning Commission have a discussion with the RRPC about the Modernization grant. Mr. Biasuzzi agreed and noted he will provide contact information to Cecil Reniche-Smith. Bill Mills stated there are a couple items that can be focused on and suggested tabling the definitions. Cecil Reniche-Smith requested the definition information be sent to her and she will review the West Rutland definitions. It was noted the Planning Commission has researched and worked on the Sign regulations without any decisions made. Mr. Biasuzzi stated the Sign regulations is an easy thing to fix with the current issue being with soft signs, banners and flags that typically get put up on a temporary basis, but there is not a definition for temporary. Current regulation for a temporary sign is twice a year for 21 days each time, but they usually stay up for much longer. The banners were used during the Route 7 construction that the Select Board had made allowance for, but now that construction is completed, they should be removed. Mr. Biasuzzi stated the rules should be clear for businesses that he could communicate with the businesses. Mr. Biasuzzi noted under Section 407, a business is allowed five different types of signs for an application cost of \$68, as long as they are submitted under one application. Mr. Biasuzzi noted the material of the signs has to be wood, stone, or other natural materials, though most signs are made of aluminum with a plastic vinyl finish that can be textured to look like real wood, though the BLUO would not allow this type of material. Mr. Biasuzzi recommended doing the update to the Sign ordinance.

8. Old/New Business

Bill Mills noted the Planning Commission's annual report is due December 5th to the Town. It was suggested Commission members send comments to Cecil Reniche-Smith to assist with this report.

Jeff Biasuzzi reported he attended a municipal meeting in Montpelier at the beginning of November. There were twelve 2-hour sessions that attendees could chose 4 sessions to attend. Mr. Biasuzzi attended a wetlands session. He suggested the Planning Commission members may want to attend the next meeting.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Monday, December 5, 2022, at 6:00PM.

10. Adjournment

A motion was made by Cecil Reniche-Smith to adjourn the meeting at 7:01PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary