

**Planning Commission Meeting - Draft
June 5, 2023**

Board Members Present: Jack Schneider, Cecil Reniche-Smith, Sue Gage - Alternate

Others Present: Ed Bove, Jeff Biasuzzi, Bill Moore

Others Present Via Zoom: Sara Stevens

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 6:05PM by Cecil Reniche-Smith – Chair.

2. Agenda Approval

A motion was made by Sue Gage to approve the agenda, as amended. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Add Designated Downtown Discussion

3. Approve Meeting Minutes – May 1, 2023

This item was postponed to a subsequent meeting. It was confirmed that a member must be present at a meeting to be able to vote on meeting minutes approvals.

4. Zoning Administrator Report

Jeff Biasuzzi reported there has been applications for a single-family house, decks, and porches. Mr. Biasuzzi attended a Zoning Administrators Roundtable hosted by Ed Bove of the RRPC. There were six participants and the conversation was very good and hit the hot spots that included the lack of zoning administrators. They did not get to address S-100 that will impact the current standards in 24VSA Chapter 117 regarding housing. It is hoped to have these roundtable discussions every quarter. Mr. Biasuzzi reminded the Commission that VLCT is hosting a 2-day training session dedicated to zoning work. The tuition is \$28 and he suggested members who would like to attend to log on to vlct.org to register and the Town will reimburse the members for the registration fee. Cecil Reniche-Smith received an email regarding a Preservation Trust retreat on June 13th and 14th regarding churches and sacred places. She encouraged members of the Commission to attend. The retreat involves coming with a project to discuss and then having a roundtable discussion. Bill Moore stated he has attended this type of roundtable and it is very useful.

5. Energy Committee (BEC) Report

Jack Schneider reported two members of the BEC attended the VECAN annual summit by Bill McKibben. There was a presentation by the Federal Funding coordinator for Vermont. There are several grant programs available for various energy projects. The BEC is trying to determine how to relay the information to the community. Powering Affordable Clean Energy (PACE) will provide loans for solar facilities and it was suggested the Town and SolarFest could get a loan. In some cases, 20% or 40% of the loan can be forgiven. Some of this money is ARPA funds and IRA money. The BEC had a discussion about the July 4th parade. The BEC will have a parade entry that will include a chariot and the Town's E-bikes. There will be a booth in Central Park that the BEC and Planning Commission will share. The BEC will be promoting the July 8th Davenport Festival and the July 15th/16th SolarFest. The BEC is trying to figure out how to staff all of the events. There are volunteers that will march in the parade and participate in SolarFest and the Davenport Festival. Sue Gage volunteered for the BEC events. The BEC is creating a master email list that will include names from the Imagine Zero's listing. There are 1500 people on the Chamber email list and the BEC would like to send notices out just before the Davenport Festival under the Town's email, as it is a Town event.

6. Designated Downtown Discussion

Brandon Planning Commission Meeting
June 5, 2023

Bill Moore was present to talk about the topic of Downtown Designation. He noted Brandon is one of 23 designated downtowns in the State that affords tax credits. It was last updated in 2017 and Mr. Moore asked the Planning Commission to consider opening it up to expand the downtown to add more businesses and go further north on Route 7 to include the Brandon Medical Center and a housing project that would allow for a neighborhood development area. Mr. Moore stated this could be the easiest way to afford an NDA to allow exemption from Act 250, receive reductions in fees, exemption from land gains tax and receive priority consideration for State grants. This will make it easier to build housing. Ed Bove suggested starting with Richard Amore who does downtown designations for the State and ask about the expansion, as they want to know the reason for an expansion and will want the regions and designations. Mr. Bove noted the RRPC could assist with the map. The Town would not require a hearing. It was noted there is a push for NDA areas and if the downtown designation can't be extended, it would be good for an NDA. Jeff Biasuzzi suggested trying to get the area from Steinberg Road to Lover's Lane included as this is an area for expansion. Mr. Moore stated one possibility would be to get an NDA set and create a village center designation for Park Village and then capture that area. Cecil Reniche-Smith suggested also getting a village designation for Forestdale. Mr. Moore advised the Town would expand the designation and then add Park Village and Forestdale. Mr. Bove advised statute requires there needs to be civic, churches and businesses for a designated area. Mr. Moore will contact Richard Amore and will get back to the Planning Commission on this topic.

7. Public Participation

There was no discussion held.

8. BLUO/Town Plan Update Session

. Town Plan Review

Ed Bove was present to review the next two chapters of the Town Plan. There was a Planning Commission special meeting held that provided some suggestions. Mr. Bove sent the Town Plan maps to the Commission for a discussion and suggested the draft Town Plan needs to have all of the versions coordinated into one on-line version that everyone can work from. Cecil Reniche-Smith will obtain Natalie Steen's information and will incorporate all of the information to one document. Mr. Bove noted at the last meeting there was discussion of public facilities and recreation. This meeting was about transportation and historical. In going forward when more Planning Commission members are present, there can be a discussion about one working document. Mr. Bove has asked Ethan at the RRPC to assist with transportation to make updates and assure the data is accurate. Moving to next month, Mr. Bove will have Stephanie at RRPC look at flood resilience. Cecil Reniche-Smith reported the Planning Commission is doing community outreach and she provided a link to the Town Plan for the community to view. She noted there was a good turnout with 50 people in attendance at the meeting and advised there was a lot of focus on action items. Ms. Reniche-Smith asked if there is a way to get a train station stop in Brandon and Sue Gage advised the prior Town Manager and Bill Moore had requested a stop previously without success. Ed Bove stated that could be included into the Town Plan as an action item. Mr. Bove stated the updated data from the census is still outstanding. The RRPC has hired a consultant to do a regional housing research and they have asked to have Brandon looked at closely. Mr. Bove stated the Town has 13 maps in the Town Plan and statutorily one only needs to have 4 maps. The four statutory maps required are: Future Land Use, Transportation, Community Facility, and Natural Resources. Usually, Natural Resource is larger and may need two maps. The Future Land Use map holds weight as far as statutory status. The Downtown Designation needs to be shown on a map. There is a Village Center district map but is not the actual Downtown Designation as it expands up into the Village Center district. There needs to be an adjustment on the Future Land Use map to include the Downtown Designation. Mr. Bove would like to do a revision of the maps in October. Other maps include a 3-phase map, Bio-Mass map, and a Utilities map that is required. He noted all maps have different styles and it would be good to have a similar theme. Ms. Reniche-Smith suggested including a Fire District map. Mr. Bove advised he will get his mapper to create some good maps. There are also three Natural Resource maps, a Slopes map that he is unsure this topic needs its own map, and the Transportation map that is a required element. He likes the concept of the Development by Parcel map for zoning and Town Plan work that shows the value per acre and shows mixed use is making the Town more money and shows a lot of properties along Main Street are high producing. The last map is the Forest Habitat that became a requirement in statute in 2017 and Mr. Bove advised this map will need to be revised. This map shows the blocks for habitat travel. Mr. Bove stated language needs to be added

about Act 171 in the Natural Resources chapter. When the final draft version is done, he will provide additional information about this subject. As a group, Mr. Bove suggested a review the maps and know that there may be some maps to eliminate, change or update. Expanding the Downtown Designation needs language in the Town Plan in addition to being on the map and changing the renewal date to 2025 from 2017.

Mr. Bove stated there are additional maps that include wind, solar and hydro potential in the Energy section in addition to the maps reviewed. The Enhanced Energy chapter will be reviewed in November and all additional maps will need to be reviewed. The BEC will need to determine if they have enough information to update the Energy Plan. Jack Schneider stated all of the statistics are old. Mr. Bove stated there is a new PSD checklist for energy plans that he will send to the Planning Commission. They have added a couple of items and use all of the new maps that will be coming on-line and it is hoped that by November all of the information will be available. The Public Service Department has indicated if the energy portion is not updated with the current data, it will not be considered an enhanced plan. It was noted the Town Plan could be amended at a later time once the information is received from the PSD. Mr. Bove summarized that the Planning Commission needs to have one working draft that all members have access to, continue going through the chapters, the RRPC to help with flood resilience and transportation, and it is hoped the data for housing will be available soon. For the Future Land Use section, it is hoped to review this map with a walkabout in the fall. It was noted this will be warned as a special meeting. If tying this into zoning, there will be discussion of density and setbacks.

. BLUO Review

Mr. Bove advised he had provided highlights for the zoning document for suggested zoning tweaks. It is thought that Act 171 will be signed soon with the major criteria being sewer and water. Mr. Bove stated the RRPC will need to visit all towns that will be affected. The Bill S-100 can be viewed on Vermont.gov. Cecil Reniche-Smith advised Representative Stephanie Jerome will be present at the next meeting to discuss this bill. Much of what the bill is calling for are items that the Planning Commission is already moving forward on.

8. New/Old Business

Jack Schneider suggested the Planning Commission's booth at the July 1st event would be a good place to obtain input on the Town Plan. Ed Bove encouraged the Planning Commission to send him any social promotion items to post.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Monday, July 17, 2023 at 6:00PM at the Town Hall.

Monday, August 21, 2023 at 6:00PM at the Town Hall.

10. Adjournment

A motion was made by Jack Schneider to adjourn the meeting at 7:19PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary