

**Planning Commission Meeting - Draft
August 21, 2023**

Board Members Present: Jack Schneider, Cecil Reniche-Smith, Sara Stevens, Neil Silins - Alternate

Board Members Present Via Zoom: Bob Foley, Natalie Steen

Others Present: Bill Moore, Stephanie Jerome, Logan Solomon

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 6:01PM by Cecil Reniche-Smith – Chair.

Cecil Reniche-Smith welcomed Sara Stevens as the new Planning Commission Board member and Neil Silins as the new Planning Commission alternate.

2. Agenda Approval

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

Move Logan Solomon, new contact person at RRPC, to discuss Town Plan immediately following Representative Jerome’s presentation.

3. Approve Meeting Minutes – June 5, 2023

A motion was made by Bob Foley to approve the June 5, 2023 Brandon Planning Commission meeting minutes. **The motion passed.**

4. Presentation by Representative Stephanie Jerome

Representative Stephanie Jerome was present to discuss the S-100 legislation. Ms. Jerome provided a copy of the Fiscal Note and S-100 Summary (See attached). She noted that Brandon has a Town Plan and BLUO and this legislation tweaks what the Town is already doing. Some highlights include: major investments in affordable housing, relaxes Act 250 to increase local development in the town center and addresses several critical housing goals (increases density, reduces excess parking requirements, allows a 40% density bonus to the business district, allows duplexes where single family houses are allowed). There are financial incentives for rental units that are not occupied to get them back on the market. Ms. Jerome noted there is a lot of money in this bill and a lot of solid programs. For Brandon, there will be benefits with regards to density and in allowing for duplexes. It was noted that there may be issues with setbacks. Cecil Reniche-Smith advised the Planning Commission will be discussing changes in setbacks. Ms. Jerome stated the goal is to create livable, walkable communities. Mr. Biasuzzi suggested obtaining a legal opinion regarding the process when the State law has gone into effect but the local ordinance has not made the changes yet. Ms. Jerome reported the bill went into effect on July 1, 2023, but there are varying dates for when certain sections take effect. Ms. Reniche-Smith stated where the BLUO conflicts with the law, a change will be required as the governing law of the State trumps local law. Ms. Reniche-Smith will reach out to the legal department at VLCT to discuss the law. Logan Solomon suggested copying the RRPC on this topic when reaching out to the VLCT. Until the BLUO is amended, people may go to the DRB to request a variance. Bill Moore asked if the 10-acre town versus a 1-acre town should also be addressed. Mr. Biasuzzi provided an explanation of a 1-acre versus a 10-acre town. Cecil Reniche-Smith suggested this is an item that should also be discussed with the Select Board. Representative Jerome suggested the Planning Commission take a deeper dive into the bill with the assistance of the RRPC.

5. Town Plan Update Session

Logan Solomon of the RRPC is assisting with integrating S-100 for the towns. Mr. Solomon requested a status on the Planning Commissions update of the Town Plan and advised he will develop a timeline for completing the update that is

due by the end of February 2024. Cecil Reniche-Smith reported that to date edits have been provided to the Board Chair that have been combined into a single, red-lined master draft. Many of the outstanding items require updating of data. The focus has been on what the stated goals, objectives, action items and accomplishments have been in each section. There has been discussion of the Enhanced Energy Plan being a separate document from the Town Plan with an abbreviated Energy section in the Plan. Jack Schneider noted the BEC is working with the RRPC on this subject and it is mostly complete with the exception of updated data. The goal is to have the Town Plan ready to begin the renewal process with public meetings by the end of October. Discussion occurred regarding action items and goals. Ms. Reniche-Smith provided a sampling of a section that outlines the goals and policies. Ms. Reniche-Smith will work with the RRPC to complete the final draft. It is hoped that the RRPC will assist with the data and maps and review to assure the Plan meets State requirements. There was a discussion of what maps should be included in the Town Plan. Mr. Solomon will discuss this topic with the RRPC's map expert and will highlight the maps that are required by the State. Mr. Solomon requested a copy of the current red-line document.

Housing – data needs to be updated. Cecil Reniche-Smith will add a section on how the BLUO is changing. Jeff Biasuzzi suggested including accomplishments. Ms. Reniche-Smith will obtain information from Steve Cijka regarding the wastewater treatment plant upgrades.

Childcare – Jack Schneider provided information from the State Childcare site. A potential action item – to establish a teen or girls/boys club.

6. Zoning Administrator Report

Jeff Biasuzzi provided a Zoning Administrator report that included a list of permits since the first of the year (see attached). Mr. Biasuzzi provided a historical outline of the Dunkin Donuts permitting. They had not applied for the Dunkin Donuts signs and have an option to go before the DRB. Mr. Biasuzzi is in the process of going forward with some other egregious long-term issues. Cecil Reniche-Smith expressed concern with the laundromat signage and other temporary signage that are non-compliant. Mr. Biasuzzi reported the Woods Lane issue is going to environmental court and provided information on some items that will be going to the DRB for variances.

7. Presentation by Bill Moore re: RAMP (Website – rutlandramp.com)

Bill Moore provided an update on RAMP (Rutland Regional Asset Mapping Project) that currently plots out recreational assets for the initial towns of Brandon, West Haven, and Mendon, with the next phase to map the recreational assets for the entire county. Mr. Moore advised there is the desire to develop a comprehensive working events calendar for each community that will feed into a regional calendar. The map and the calendar will be two separate items and will serve as a way for people to one-stop shop for all activities that are happening in each town. The RRPC is using a match for the grant from the VT Department of Health to assure this program is inclusive and includes an outdoor aspect. Mr. Moore stated the work on this project can be accomplished by the Rec Department, with the assistance of the Chamber of Commerce. There is also a potential outside vendor to assist with this program. It was suggested a Town newsletter could also be helpful in providing this type of information to the community. Mr. Moore advised that an email listing has been developed for the municipality.

8. Energy Committee (BEC) Report

Jack Schneider reported there will soon be a group of energy-related books located in the lower level of the Town Hall. The BEC is hiring a consultant to create a report card for Brandon regarding the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and increased local renewable energy. A proposal was submitted for Town ARPA funds for design work for a local solar array. There will be two Button-up Brandon events this fall in conjunction with SolarFest on October 11th for town businesses and November 8th for town residents on how to weatherize houses and discuss Efficiency Vermont rebates.

9. Public Participation and Comment

There was no discussion held.

10. New/Old Business

The Planning Commission members were encouraged to send any additional Town Plan updates to the Board Chair. An updated red-line version that has all members' input to date was sent to the Planning Commission members for additional comments or edits. It was noted that the purpose of the Town Plan is to know that there is a guiding philosophy for the Town and also provides eligibility for municipal grants.

With regard to economic development, it was reported that the winery and cabins property is under a sales contract.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Monday, September 18, 2023 - 6:00PM – Brandon Town Hall.

10. Adjournment

A motion was made by Jack Schneider to adjourn the meeting at 8:05PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary