

Draft Minutes

Middlesex Planning Commission

Wednesday, January 15, 2020

6:00 PM

Middlesex Town Clerk's Office

5 Church Street

Middlesex, Vermont 05602

(802) 223-5915

Planning Commission Members

Elias Gardner – Absent

Theo Kennedy

Sandy Levine

Mitch Osiecki

Dick Alderman – Absent

Guests

Mike Pelchar

TJ Kingsbury

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm.

Adjustments to Agenda

No adjustments to agenda.

Approval of Minutes

Theo moved to approve minutes of meeting of December 18; Mitch seconded. **Motion carried, 3-0.**

Old Business

Enhanced Energy Plan

Discussion of adoption process. Theo will consult with Zach Maia of CVRPC to confirm understanding that the process basically follows that of Town Plan update. Will report back at February meeting.

One item was raised that could raise some concern: Table 13 shows a list of small residential solar or wind projects, which are identified by name. It might be anticipated that some residents could raise privacy concerns, even though this information might be publicly available. Theo will research whether we might have some latitude as to whether we can list the projects without naming the landowners.

Homework for the February meeting: all members are asked to take some time to review the final draft carefully. February meeting will include a discussion of the draft plan. We anticipate making final edits and approving the draft plan at that meeting.

MPG Update

Mitch presented an overview of our MPG project, including an outline of anticipated steps involved in final product, a feasibility study for improvements to the transportation infrastructure in the Village Center.

Theo commented that a somewhat similar project was undertaken around 2011, which produced some rough proposals for potential developments to what is now the Village Center, but nothing seems to have been done with that work. Theo expressed his concern that he'd hate to see a consultant come in and spent time and money to product that's already been proposed. Mitch and Theo will collaborate to get a better understanding of what was done previously. We will plan to make this information available to our project partner and see if any of the previous work still has value.

The original information shared by consultant Juli Beth Hinds of Birchline Planning is that MPG projects tend to gear up in April or May; we've been advised to try to get ahead of the curve. However, a recent update from Juli Beth, which was confirmed by Brandy Saxton (another planning consultant) indicates that many grant recipients are starting early. We've been advised to get an RFP out to potential resources as soon as possible.

Juli Beth shared a couple of sample RFP's from other communities. Sandy has offered to draft an RFP for review at the February meeting. Juli Beth is engaged by Planetary Matters, so has indicated that she will not be a viable candidate to work with us. It might be worth seeing if CathyAnn Larose has any interest. Mitch shared that the Department of Housing and Community Development (the MPG administrators) maintain a list of consultants interested in working on MPG projects. Mitch will contact this agency and 1) get a current list of planning consultants, and 2) ask for guidance about how to proceed (basically how many bids we should seek). Mitch and Sandy will collaborate to produce a list of project candidates for the February meeting.

On a related note, Mitch shared feedback from Juli Beth that another small project we might strongly consider is to go through our recently adopted Town Plan and pull all of the stated goals from the plan and organize them into a Planning Matrix. Prioritizing these goals can be extremely useful in guiding the Planning Commission as we pursue additional grant opportunities in the coming years. This will also serve as a useful way of engaging with the community about future opportunities. Juli Beth mentioned that there are "mini-grants" available to help engage planning consultants for small projects like this. Sandy noted that CathyAnn Larose had intended to this as part of our Town Plan update, but time ran short. We'll keep this in mind and see if we can pursue this project in the coming year.

Town Meeting

We should consider soon whether we want to have an Information Table at Town Meeting. With newly adopted Town Plan, Village Center Designation, and Municipal Planning Grant, we have lots of good

information to share. Members are asked to give this some thought and be ready to make decision at February meeting.

Zoning Regulation Update

Sandy has had some preliminary conversations with the CVRPC about undertaking updates to our zoning regulations. As previously mentioned, the Select Board has indicated that they are supportive of this effort. The general consensus of members of the PC is that we should “think big.” If we’re going to undertake this effort, a comprehensive rewrite of regulations is highly preferable to a cosmetic update of the current regulations.

With Enhanced Energy Plan adoption and MPG launch already on the agenda For the February meeting, we will defer further discussion of update to zoning regulations until the March meeting.

New Business

None

Correspondence

None

Next Meeting Wednesday, February 19 at 6:00.

Adjournment

Sandy moved to adjourn; Mitch seconded. **Motion carried, 3-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:18 pm.

Dick Alderman _____ N/A _____

Elias Gardner _____ N/A _____

Theo Kennedy _____

Sandra Levine _____

Mitch Osiecki _____