

Draft Minutes

Meeting of the Middlesex Planning Commission

Wednesday, February 17, 2021
6:00 PM

Due to restrictions on public gatherings as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, these hearings were held remotely via the town's Zoom account and telephone.

Planning Commission Members Present

Sandy Levine

Elias Gardner

Theo Kennedy

Mitch Osiecki

Guests:

Kevin Thompson, Zoning Administrator

Clare Rock – CVRPC

Tony Barbagello

Michael Levine

Call to Order

Chair Sandy Levine called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

Introductions were made and guests were welcomed to the meeting.

Old Business

Zoning regulation updates

Clare summarized discussions from last month: revisions to definitions, changes of allowable uses, setback and dimensional standards in the three districts we've been working on (Village, Mixed-Use and Industrial-West).

Further discussion of the desire to fine-tune the definition of gas station and the requirements for a site plan review of such a use.

Clare shared examples of standards from Moretown and Bolton. Observation was made that both represent improvements over our current language, but that we would still want to tweak the language specific to our village.

Moving on to Industrial-East and Floodplain Regulations...

Clare presented an overview of floodplain development review standards.

Towns have some latitude in establishing standards governing the uses allowed in a floodplain, as well as the degree to which such development is regulated.

Most of the current Industrial-East district lies within the mapped Flood Hazard Area, which severely limits future development within the district.

Clare shared Vermont's model Flood Hazard Bylaws – Higher Standards Cross-walk. Of note in the model bylaws are requirements to track progress toward goals, such as Objectives and Strategies in the Town Plan to mitigate effects of flooding. The model bylaws also increase Prohibited Uses and Standards for Permitted Uses.

Next Steps? Do we want to solicit community feedback at this point?

We will probably want to take a closer look at the River Corridor Standards.

Current regulations prohibit new residential "structures." But the owner of an existing structure could seek a change of use from single-family dwelling to multi-family dwelling, which would have the effect of increasing the number of dwelling units in the floodplain. We may wish to tighten language in order to discourage an increase in the number of dwelling units in the floodplain.

Do we have a good enough understanding of floodplain regulation issues to begin drafting revised language? Consensus is that we do.

Observation was made that we may wish to include a table in Article 5.6 that makes it clearer what development can or can't be undertaken in the Flood Hazard Area. The new table could look much like the tables in Article 2, but duplicated in Article 5.6 for convenience.

Clarifying question from Michael Levine: How is flood elevation mitigation done without causing other issues downstream?

Clare mentioned a couple of strategies that can be used: (1) add fill to raise lowest level of structure above base flood elevation; (2) build a crawlspace below base flood elevation, which allows floodwaters to flow through structure below its usable levels.

Other Business:

VTrans Scoping study.

Approval is pending. When paperwork is finalized, CVRPC will administer grant. As discussed previously, DuBois & King is pre-approved, so no need to seek bids before engaging them.

Enhanced Energy Plan

As previously discussed, the EEP may be able to go to voters for approval in November. The SB needs to hold hearings on it, which will happen after Town Meeting Day. Theo raised the possibility of adding lighting standards that the Energy Committee has been working on. Clare reminded us that to add the Energy Plan the Town needs to include this in a full Town Plan and put it to the voters for approval.

Better Places Grant

Decision pending – perhaps by end of February.

Status of Subdivision Requests

ZA has approved the Payne/Ballard subdivision permit.

Manosh has submitted a revised permit application. Hearing scheduled for March 10 at 6:00.

Kingsbury also has a permit pending that will need a hearing. Application not yet submitted, but expected by the end of this week. Anticipate a hearing on March 24 at 6:00.

Capital Planning & Budget Meeting (virtual, of course)

Tomorrow, February 18. Theo is participating. It would be good to hear some feedback from the community as to what projects have support.

Approval of Minutes

Elias moved to approve minutes of January 20, subject to edits suggested by Sandy. Theo seconded. Motion passed, 4-0.

Next Meetings

Wednesday, March 10 at 6:00 pm -- Manosh Subdivision

Wednesday, March 17 at 6:00 pm – Regular March Meeting

Wednesday, March 24 at 6:00 pm – Kingsbury Hearing

Adjournment

Theo moved to adjourn; Elias seconded. Motion passed, 4-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.