

# Draft Minutes

Meeting of the Middlesex Planning Commission  
Wednesday, October 20, 2021  
6:00 PM  
Middlesex Town Clerk's Office  
5 Church Street  
Middlesex, VT 05602

**This meeting was conducted remotely using the town's Zoom account. But with the lifting of the Governor's State of Emergency, the Middlesex Planning Commission also allowed for in-person attendance. PC member Mitch Osiecki attended from the Town Clerk's office, which was open in the event any resident wished to attend this meeting in person.**

## Planning Commission Members Present

Sandy Levine  
Elias Gardner  
Philip Comen  
Mitch Osiecki  
Theo Kennedy (joined the meeting in-progress)

## Guests:

Chris Sargent, Dubois & King  
Julia Ursaki, Dubois & King  
Clare Rock, CVRPC (joined meeting in-progress)

## **Call to Order**

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

Roll Call: All members of the Planning Commission except Theo Kennedy were present (Theo to join later).

Sandy introduced members of the Planning Commission and welcomed Chris and Julia from D&K.

Mitch Osiecki attended from the Town Clerk's Office, which was available as an in-person meeting site. Everyone else attended remotely via Zoom.

No adjustments to the agenda.

## **Old Business:**

### *Select Board Update*

Sandy and Mitch met with the Select Board at their meeting on October 5. Sandy provided the SB with an update on various projects the PC is working on.

### *Ongoing Projects*

- Better Places Grant  
paperwork is completed;  
building materials are in place;  
area to remain closed until fencing along river is installed;  
easements have also been finalized;  
zoning permits have been submitted to Middlesex, but may not be needed (no structures).
- Project List was updated prior to meeting with SB; no changes since then
- Permit/Hearing update  
Scribner decision has been issued  
Stewart hearing has closed; Theo is drafting decision

### *Walkable Village Scoping Study*

Julia Ursaki led a presentation of design alternatives

#### Alternative 1

- Sidewalks along south side of Route 2;
- Could be raised above level of roadway;
- Could be lowered to near level of road;
- 10 foot wide multiuse trail using VTrans ROW

#### Alternative 2

- Reduce length of sidewalk;
- Explores road realignment in order to minimize public property changes impact on adjacent private property.

#### Alternative 3

- Explores the potential of road realignment to allow for bike lanes and sidewalks connecting the whole of Middlesex Village

Two other alternatives were considered, but various constraints ultimately resulted in these options being deemed unviable.

Next steps:

- Gather feedback;
- Fine-tune some details;
- Prepare for a public presentation.

Brief review of survey responses

The big takeaway is that there is broad recognition that walking in the village feels unsafe.

Those opposing sidewalks are either concerned with effect on property taxes or don't see the need.

Chris and Julia departed and Clare Rock joined the meeting at 6:30.

### *Budget*

Last year's budget was \$11K in total, most due to consulting costs.

Sandy suggested that we may wish to consider a modest increase in advertising, mailing and printing expenses, due to anticipated additional public outreach efforts. But we shouldn't have significant consulting expenses next year.

Advertising, mailing, and printing expenses had been \$500 each. Increase each to \$1000. Consulting expenses: drop from \$9,500 to \$2,500.

Might want to consider setting aside some funds for a grant-match. But we are not allowed to let such funds carry over from one year to another. Grants typically require a 10% match. A typical grant request might be \$20,000. We might want to consider requesting \$2,500 in anticipation of a grant request.

Sandy will write up and submit a budget proposal on behalf of the PC.

One additional item: The town gets 10 hours of GIS services from CVRPC as part of our membership. Additional GIS mapping services are billed at around \$100 per hour. May want to budget for some additional GIS mapping assistance. We will request \$3,500 for consulting and mapping services; \$2,000 for grant match; \$1,000 each for advertising, mailing, and printing expenses.

**Motion:** Mitch moved to approve budget request of \$8,500 and authorize Sandy to submit that proposal on behalf of the PC. Elias seconded. **Motion passed, 4-0-0 (Theo absent).**

Select Board is set to consider downgrading a section of Dolan Road from Class 4 to Legal Trail at next regular meeting in November. Downgrade to legal trail would preserve right of the public for use of the trail for recreational purposes, but would rid town of obligation for most maintenance costs.

## *Energy Plan*

Public Hearing on the Enhanced Energy Plan scheduled for next week: Thursday, October 28 at 6:00.

Some public outreach in advance of this meeting might be a good idea – either by the PC or the Energy Committee. Sandy will check with Lauri Scharf to coordinate.

## *Zoning Updates*

Clare discussed possible changes to standards included in Tables 2.4 (Medium Density Residential), 2.5 (Low Density Residential) & 2.6 (Conservation)

### **2.4 MDR standards**

- Allow daycare facility and multi-family (2-4 units) as permitted uses;
- Remove Agricultural and Forestry (exempt);
- Remove the “minimum area per unit” standard – suggest instead 2-acres per dwelling unit. Also clarify lot size to support larger dwelling units.

Theo joined meeting at 7:10.

Sandy supports increased density allowances. No concerns about 4 dwelling units on a 2-acre lot. Also suggests that a similar standard might be sensible in the Mixed Use district.

We should ensure that the regulations specify the standard of “one principle use per lot” in all residential districts. Mixed use and village districts typically allow for more than one principle uses.

Theo noted that we had previously some other changes to residential district standards – we should make sure those edits are incorporated.

Clarify setback standards, particularly front of lot.

### **2.5 Rural Residential standards**

- Remove Agricultural and Forestry (exempt);
- Remove maximum overall density and minimum lot size requirements. Consider having a minimum lot size or possibly a different minimum area per dwelling unit standard.

Mitch noted that some problems have sometimes arisen in documenting/approving survey plats. There is currently no requirement that a survey plat be reviewed before it is recorded in land records. Survey plats are sometimes submitted that differ from what was approved by zoning administrator or Planning Commission. Will be discussed further when we take up subdivision review.

Suggest that in RR district, we could allow two dwelling units per 5 acres (similar to the increased density we allowed in MDR district).

Consider allowing conversion of a single-family dwelling to multi-unit apartments or dwelling units. Applicant would need to secure proper septic permits for such changes.

## **2.6 Conservation District standards**

- Remove Agricultural and Forestry (exempt);
- Review maximum overall density and minimum lot size standards.

There is currently no allowance for multi-family dwelling units in this district.

Any other standards/dimensionality concerns? None raised.

Next meeting: deeper dive into lot density standards and subdivision regulation.

There is a regulatory change working its way through the legislature that says, in effect, anywhere that a single-family dwelling is allowed, a two-family dwelling should also be allowed.

Mitch noted that there is a provision in the current regulation that says the PC is supposed to keep records of lots that have been approved for subdivisions.

## **Correspondence**

None

## **Minutes**

Phil moved to approve meeting minutes of September 15; Elias seconded. **Motion passed, 5-0-0.**

## **Upcoming Meetings:**

- Thursday, Oct 28: Energy Plan
- Wednesday, Nov 17: Regular monthly meeting

## **Adjournment**

Mitch moved to adjourn; Phil seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitch Osiecki  
Planning Commission Secretary