

Draft Minutes

Meeting of the Middlesex Planning Commission
Wednesday, November 16, 2022
6:00 PM
Middlesex Town Clerk's Office
5 Church Street
Middlesex, VT 05602

This meeting was conducted in-person at the Town Clerk's Office and remotely using the town's Zoom account.

Planning Commission Members

Nicole D'Agostino
Theo Kennedy - absent
Sandy Levine - absent
Jon Leibowitz
Mitch Osiecki

Guests:

Liz Scharf, Select Board
Brian Voight, Central Vermont Planning Commission
Hal Ellms, resident
Jennifer Chambers, Worcester resident
Jeremy Fidel, Vermont Natural Resources Council (joined at 7:00)

Call to Order

Vice-chair Jon Liebowitz called the meeting to order at 6:08 pm.

Roll Call: Jon, Nicole, and Mitch were present; Sandy and Theo were absent.

Mitch attended from the Town Clerk's Office; all others participated via Zoom.

Jon made introductions and welcomed guests to the meeting.

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

New Business:

Municipal Planning Grant

Jon read into the record the text of a resolution in support of the Select Board seeking a Municipal Planning Grant to study renovating or replacing the Town Hall. (Text of the resolution attached).

Liz Scharf shared some additional context behind the desire to explore options for the future of the existing building.

Motion: Mitch moved to approve the resolution; Nicole seconded.

Vote to approve: 3-0.

Old Business:

Upcoming Projects:

1. Discuss establishment of a cannabis control commission.
2. Next steps with respect to wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation planning.
3. Next steps -- Walkable Middlesex Plan.

Cannabis: we will invite Ann Gilbert to attend the December PC meeting. The CVRPC will also share some thought on this topic.

Wildlife habitat, contiguous forest blocks, outdoor recreation planning. Will discuss later during this meeting. It is important to find the appropriate balance between competing interests.

Walkable Middlesex Plan. Will take this up during 2023.

Ongoing Projects:

Update of Zoning Regulations – Select Board approved the final draft of the regs with no changes. Approval of regs will be a ballot item at Town Meeting in March.

Municipal Planning Grant – Resolution approved tonight.

Wrightsville Beach Association – Seeking partners for advocacy of projects to support their mission. The group is moving toward making their Executive Director full time, which will allow them to do more outdoor recreation planning.

Village Water & Sewer – Will discuss in 2023.

Minutes

Motion: Nicole moved to approve draft minutes of PC meeting on October 19; Mitch seconded.

Vote to approve: 3-0.

PC Meeting took a 10 minute recess (ahead of schedule, and have a guest arriving at 7:00). The PC reconvened and Jon welcomed Jeremy Fidel of the Vermont Natural Resources Council. Jeremy is the organization's Forest & Wildlife Director.

Jeremy made some brief remarks explaining the work of his organization. One effort is to support towns interested in the management of their natural spaces. They can assist with such things as Natural Resource Planning/Maintaining a Resilient Landscape.

One ongoing concern is parcelization – the fragmentation of large, contiguous forest blocks.

Discussed trends in usage of private lands in Vermont. In 2016,

- 40% of private land was in residential development;
- 26% was woodland;
- 70% of lots were 50 acres or larger.

A useful resource: vforesttrends.vnrc.org

VNRC reviews Town Plans, Zoning Regulations every ten years (2001, 2011, and 2021) in conjunction with Fish & Wildlife.

Hal Ellms commented that he appreciated the overview.

Jon asked whether subdivision of lands is the main driver of forest fragmentation. It is.

Jeremy was asked if he could recommend a particular next step the PC might consider.
Response: perhaps a wildlife inventory.

Any outdoor recreation planning suggestions?
Response: that activity is outside the scope of the VNRC.

Next Meeting

- Dec 21 – Regular monthly meeting.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitch Osiecki,
Planning Commission secretary

Middlesex Planning Commission

Resolution to Support Middlesex's application for a Municipal Planning Grant for the "Middlesex Town Hall Strategic Planning Study"

Proposed Resolution:

"The Middlesex Planning Commission supports the Town of Middlesex's application for a Municipal Planning Grant for the "Middlesex Town Hall Strategic Planning Study."

This grant will support work identified in our Capital Plan and is supported by various portions of the Middlesex Town Plan as identified in the grant application.

Approved by Vote of the Middlesex Planning Commission 11/16/2022.