

# Draft Minutes

**Middlesex Planning Commission  
Wednesday, February 6, 2019  
6:00 PM  
Middlesex Town Clerk's Office  
5 Church Street  
Middlesex, Vermont 05602  
(802) 223-5915**

Planning Commission Members Present

Barry Bolio, Chair

Theo Kennedy

Sandy Levine

Mitch Osiecki

Troy Sumner

Guest

Cathyann LaRose, Planning Consultant

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

Guest welcomed.

## **Adjustments to agenda**

Add several items:

- Approve agreement with Planning Consultant;
- Update on meeting with Select Board;
- Update on What's Next Middlesex meeting

## **New Business**

Sandy gave a brief update on the WNM meeting of Jan 31. Various groups formed out of WNM forum are making progress on a number of fronts, all of which can provide useful to our updated Town Plan.

Sandy also provided update on meeting with Select Board on Feb 3. Select Board somewhat reluctantly agreed to PC request for funds to pay for consulting services to help expedite an updated Town Plan.

Concerns were expressed that funds were requested almost immediately after approving our budget for FY 2020. Sandy defended our request by explaining that the need to accelerate work on Town Plan did not become clear until after we had submitted our budget.

Another reservation expressed by some members of the SB was that previous consultants hired by Town have sometimes delivered unsatisfactory products. Sandy expressed the PC's shared commitment to delivering a quality report on an accelerated schedule. A revelation to all was that the PC currently has a balance of about \$2000 for the current year, which we are applying to the needed consulting services.

### **Motion**

Theo moves to approve contract with Planning Consultant. Sandy seconds. Motion carries unanimously.

### **Town Plan Update**

Introductions made between Cathy and members of the PC. Cathy lead a discussion of her preliminary schedule for drafts, workshops and various meetings that will be required to deliver a revised Town Plan. This plan anticipates a draft to be completed by early May, with Planning Commission public hearings to be conducted over the summer and culminating in a special meeting to vote on adoption in late summer/early fall.

The preliminary schedule anticipated delivery of a draft covering two of the four "themes" addressed in to Town Plan outline by 2/24, with a working session of the PC to be convened on 2/27 to review. Upon discussion, it seems more realistic to schedule the working session for 3/6. The 3/6 date is the day after Town Meeting, which will require that the two new PC members elected at Town Meeting be quickly brought up to speed. The draft that Cathy delivers on 2/27 will also be shared with the three candidates for the two open seats, so all members can be prepared for substantive discussions on 3/6.

It was mentioned during these discussions that the CVRPC has limited availability to assist in the review of our draft town plan. It will be important to communicate with the CVRPC so that they have time to provide assistance as we proceed.

Our current Town Plan does address energy siting, although it falls the full requirements of an Enhanced Energy Plan. Mitch shared that he attended a workshop in Moretown on the Enhanced Energy Plan, led by representatives of the CVRPC and attended by planning/zoning officials from Waitsfield, Moretown and Middlesex. A key takeaway from that workshop was the guidance that an Enhanced Energy plan typically takes 9-12 months to develop. The PC can choose to update the energy portion of the Town Plan, indicating the intention of adding an Enhanced Energy Plan at a later date, which is the model the PC anticipates following.

### **Town Plan Survey Update**

Mitch shared a summary of responses to the 260 or so responses received from the survey developed to seek input from residents. The original plan was to follow up the online survey by printing and mailing a version to town residents and nonresident landowners. Citing shifting priorities as we focus on an

accelerated revision to our Town Plan, the PC decided last month to forego the time and expense of mailing paper versions of the survey. When attending recent SB meeting, Sandy was given feedback that this decision might be a “grievous error” in the eyes of one board member. That same opinion was conveyed to Mitch recently as well. While the PC is happy to gather as much input from residents as is practical, the common belief is that a paper version of the survey will be costly, both in money and time, to produce and distribute, with little guarantee of providing a significant amount of additional feedback. The PC will make paper versions of the survey available at the Town Clerk’s office. Mitch will make regular posts on FPF urging interested residents to stop by and fill out a copy. As part of this effort, we will also offer to mail a copy of the survey to anyone interested in responding that way. Troy will look into the cost of having the survey printed and mailed in bulk, but past experience indicates that’s a costly undertaking for which we may get only minimal additional feedback. We will commit to collecting additional survey responses until the end of March.

### **Additional Planning Considerations**

Cathy reminded members that the Town Plan serves as the basis for the town’s planning goals. It is also foundation for changes to zoning regulations.

Cathy ran through a brief summary of the “required elements” of a town plan.

The PC has also received from the CVRPC a letter highlighting some deficiencies in the current town plan. A copy of the letter was provided to Cathy.

### **Schedule Adjustments**

As described earlier, the meeting scheduled for 2/27 has been moved to 3/6. It will be important to share documents and goals for that meeting with all three prospective new PC members, so that the new members can get up to speed quickly.

Also, the meeting tentatively scheduled for 3/27 has been moved to 4/3.

At this point, we anticipate a meeting on Thursday, 5/9 as public review of the draft Town Plan. This meeting is a review, not a public hearing.

Cathy also mentioned that she would find it helpful to get a driving tour of the town. Mitch offered to arrange this.

### **Other Business**

Sandy moves to approve minutes of Jan 16. Theo seconds. Motion carries unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:58.

Barry Bolio \_\_\_\_\_

Theo Kennedy \_\_\_\_\_

Sandra Levine \_\_\_\_\_

Mitch Osiecki \_\_\_\_\_

Troy Sumner \_\_\_\_\_