

Draft Minutes

Meeting of the Middlesex Planning Commission
Wednesday, October 19, 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 - absent

Theo Kennedy

Sandy Levine

Jon Leibowitz

Mitch Osiecki

Guests:

Nancy Reilly, Budget Committee

Mark Harriss, Budget Committee

Kevin Thompson, Zoning Administrator (arrived at 6:20)

Call to Order

Sandy Levine called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

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

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

Sandy made introductions and welcomed guests to the meeting.

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

New Business:

Mark Harris made a brief presentation about the Middlesex Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

The CIP is a process by which the town can plan and budget for long-term, significant capital outlay projects. Typically, any project expected to involve an expenditure by the town of \$5,000 or more should be considered under the CIP.

The overall goal is to have a transparent process that can be shared with residents whenever a significant outlay is proposed.

There are a number of mechanisms by which capital projects might be funded. CIP helps the plan track these projects, including total expenditure of town funds and the life expectancy of the project funded.

Mark noted that inflation evident over the past couple of years has already started to impact some current cost estimates. But it's important to recognize when outside economic factors impact the town budget.

CIP expenditures would be considered outside the annual budget of a board or department proposing such a project.

Old Business:

- Zoning regulation updates – the Select Board will put a discussion of zoning regulation updates on the agenda for an upcoming meeting;
- Town Plan – the CVRPC review and endorsed the Town Plan;
- Select Board update – Sandy attended yesterday's Select Board meeting and presented a quarterly update on the work of the PC;
- Project List – Sandy has also updated the project list on the shared Google drive.

Next steps for the Planning Commission:

Last month the PC discussed several possible projects we might wish to tackle in the coming year. We settled on four worth consideration:

- Establishing a Cannabis Control Commission;
- Wildlife conservation/natural resource planning/outdoor recreation;
- Implementation of the Walkable Middlesex Plan;
- Village Water & Sewer.

Mitch pitched a couple ideas to think about:

- Back in the days before COVID, the Vermont Legislature regularly held something like a Municipal Day during the legislative session. It was an opportunity for municipal officials to meet with legislators, talk about projects of interest in their communities, and get ideas how the state might be able to help. Let's keep an eye out and see if that event happens this upcoming session.
- Mitch also has a contact within the Department of Environmental Conservation who works on projects such as assisting communities in the area of establishing municipal water and sewer. Would be happy to contact her and see if she would might attend a future PC meeting and make a short presentation.

Theo mentioned that he's read or heard something about a large aquifer in the Middlesex/Moretown area. He will do some research on this.

Discussion of Cannabis Control Commission. The PC might wish to research options and make a recommendation to the Select Board.

At present, there's no strong consensus among PC members for or against establishing such a body.

The Select Board currently issues liquor licenses. Absent a CCC, would the Select Board have the authority to issue Cannabis licenses, or would that default to the state Cannabis Control Board?

Since Sandy and Theo missed last month's presentation from Ann Gilbert, we'll try to invite her back for another session. Tentatively, December meeting. Sandy will ask her to share info about models other towns have adopted.

Discussion of Wildlife Conservation/Natural Resource Planning/Outdoor Recreation.

Jon commented that this is an area of particular interest to him. Jon will do some outreach to contacts he has who work extensively in this area. He will plan to make a brief presentation at the November meeting to discuss some ideas we might pursue.

Jon noted that outdoor recreation is generally a public good, but can have potentially negative impacts on wildlife.

Mitch noted that the CVRPC has been hosting quarterly roundtable discussions with interested parties from member towns with regards to outdoor recreation planning. They've hosted representatives from the Upper Valley Trails Alliance and Mad River Trails Collaborative who have talked about some of their successes and challenges. Ongoing talks about ways member towns might cooperate on outdoor recreation projects.

Nancy Reilly shared some information on guidance from the Cannabis Control Board.

Jon Leibowitz shared some links to information on Forestland Conservation.

Theo noted that he also wishes to advocate for renewable energy infrastructure. Brief discussion ensued. Consensus that we all have lots to learn about opportunities and challenges related to renewable energy.

Minutes

Jon moved to approve draft minutes of PC meeting on September 21. Mitch seconded.

Vote to approve: 3-0-1. (Theo abstained).

Next Meetings

- Nov 16 – Regular monthly meeting.
(Sandy will be away; Jon will host).

Kevin Thompson reported that not much appears to be on the horizon, zoning-wise. There is a subdivision being discussed, but it's uncertain when it will come before the DRB.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitch Osiecki,
Planning Commission secretary