

**CITY OF VERGENNES
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, JUNE 17, 2013**

Members Present: Shannon Haggett-Chair, Tim Cook, Rebecca Duffy, Jason Farrell,
Morgan Kittredge, Mike Winslow

Members Absent: Alexandria McGuire, Stacy Raphael

Also Present: Mel Hawley, Zoning Administrator

Guests: Jim Pease, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation
Jim Larrow, City of Vergennes Public Works Supervisor

Shannon Haggett called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

After brief introductions, Mike Winslow updated Jim Pease from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, about the Planning Commission's goal of better understanding the state's stormwater policies. The group wants to proactively plan for the future to ensure that Vergennes is in compliance with state regulations and to identify locations within the city that may need attention.

Mel Hawley provided an explanation of the city's current wastewater and stormwater system including the location of major lines and pump stations, system capacity and forecasted flow management.

Jim Pease then gave an overview of basic state and federal policies. Mike asked about municipalities that have policies more stringent than the state's. He then stated that he had researched some cities and towns who have such policies and in most cases they have engineers or technical staff in place to help monitor activities and to effectively operate/enforce the regulations. Jim said he would send Mike a list of those municipalities.

Mel asked if many municipalities operate a utility for stormwater control, much like they would for water or sewer services. Jim said that it was becoming more common outside of Vermont, but has been limited in state. He added that having such a utility concept can help cover the cost of technical expertise needed to operate the system.

Jason Farrell asked about any specific sites within Vergennes that could be updated or modified to improve overall stormwater control. Jim and the group consulted the "City of Vergennes, Stormwater Infrastructure Mapping Project" written in August 2012. Jason questioned whether or not some kind of stormwater retention could be placed in Fisher Memorial Park located on South Maple Street. Jim stated he would visit the site to determine feasibility.

Jim Larrow talked about the cost of upgrades and as an example discussed a culvert in dire need of an upgrade at Monkton Road and Armory Lane. Jim Pease stated that there are grant monies available, although they are harder to come by than in the past. He mentioned VTrans Enhancement Grants and the Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP) grants. He added that the ERP grants would most likely be a better source of grant money for the types of projects Vergennes might consider. At this point, Jim Pease and Jim Larrow departed.

The minutes to the regular meeting of May 20, 2013 were reviewed. Rebecca Duffy moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Jason with all voting in favor.

The Planning Commission then reviewed draft communications to Carol Jennings and William Houston, both of whom had made requests of the group in earlier meetings. A few changes to the drafts were suggested and Mel stated that he and Shannon would complete and send final versions before the July meeting.

Committee Updates:

Transportation: Shannon updated everyone about the public forum held on May 22, 2013. He presented the list of priorities that the breakout group on pedestrian safety devised. He also explained the methodology used in establishing the priorities. He asked that for the July meeting, everyone establish their top three priorities from the report done by the Middlebury College students and/or from the set of priorities from the public forum. Once the Planning Commission's priority list is established, it will be presented to the City Council for their review.

Education: Shannon reported that he had spoken with Rebecca Coffey and they plan to meet over the summer to determine the next steps. Mel mentioned that he had spoken with her as well and there is an interest to have help with a civics class.

Stormwater: Stormwater was covered earlier in the evening with guests Jim Pease and Jim Larrow.

Tree/Urban Forestry: Mike reviewed his crowd-sourcing application on Google Maps to identify street trees within the city. He asked the group if capturing species and relative health of the trees was enough information. Tim Cook asked if it would be possible to also include whether or not a tree was an impediment – for example obstructing a sidewalk or power lines. Mike responded that this might complicate the process and as the group is planning to enlist public and student support in obtaining the information, we might be better served by keeping the process as simple as possible. Everyone agreed.

No new business was introduced.

The meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mel Hawley, Clerk