

**CITY OF VERGENNES  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
MONDAY, APRIL 21, 2014**

Members Present: Shannon Haggett-Chair, Mike Winslow-Vice Chair, Tim Cook, Rebecca Duffy, Jason Farrell, Morgan Kittredge, Alexandria McGuire, Stacy Raphael

Also Present: Mel Hawley, Zoning Administrator

Shannon called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The minutes to the regular meeting of March 17, 2014 were reviewed. Both Alex and Mike noted that in the first paragraph on page two, “your application” should be amended to read, “our application.” They also noted that in the third paragraph, “Town of Vergennes” should be amended to read, “City of Vergennes”. Mike moved to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Alex with all voting in favor except for Stacy abstaining as she was not present at the March meeting.

The group then continued a review of chapters three, four and five of the municipal development plan. The following chart outlines the status of various sections in chapters three, four and five:

<b>Section</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>PC Initiator</b>	<b>Status</b>
City Hall	Mel	Mel	Complete
Opera House	Gerianne Smart	Mel	Complete
Police	George Merkel	Mel	Complete
Fire	Jim Breur	Mel	Complete
Health - VARS	Tony Korda	Mel	Complete
Health - other	Little City Practice	Alex	Not needed - complete
Public Works	Jim Larrow	Mel	Complete
Water	VPWD	Alex & Mel	Complete
Wastewater	Mel	Mel	Complete
Storm Drainage	Mike	Mike	Complete
Solid Waste	ACSWD	Mel/Shannon	Complete
Parks & Rec.	Recreation Committee	Alex & Mel	Alex/Mel will follow up
Boys & Girls Club	Mike Reiderer	Shannon	Complete
Bixby Library	Jane Spencer	Stacy	Complete
Education	ANWSU	Shannon	Complete
Energy	Mike	Mike	Complete
Park & Ride	Jason	Jason	In progress

The group reviewed Stacy's edits for the Police entry. Mel noted that the address of the new Police Station is "8 Main Street" instead of "10 Main Street". The group suggested several grammar and word changes in the entry. Everyone agreed with all the edits to the entry.

The members then reviewed Stacy's edits for the Library entry. Jason suggested that "available spaces" in the third paragraph be changed to "spaces available". Everyone agreed with all the edits to the entry.

The group moved on to the review of Mike's edits for the Water Service entry. Mike asked for clarification of when the recent upgrades occurred. Mel stated that he would ask Jon Deming for the date of the project. The group suggested several grammar and word changes in the entry. Everyone agreed with all the edits to the entry.

The Planning Commission started review of the Industrial District entry. Discussion centered on uses in the district. Jason referred to conditional uses for the district in the current regulations, noting that child care facility was listed and wondering why. Shannon answered that he remembered a conversation during the regulation update where everyone agreed that it would be beneficial for such uses as a matter of convenience to workers in the district. Mel stated after a quick review of the regulations that nearly all districts list child care facility as a conditional use. Morgan added that there might be a state statute mandating such, and that she would investigate further. It was suggested that child care facility be added to all district entries in the plan.

The discussion then turned to non-industrial uses in the district, particularly commercial uses. Everyone struggled with how much detail to provide in the entry in regard to commercial uses. It was generally agreed that commercial uses that would not be ideal in the Commercial or Central Business Districts might be appropriate in the Industrial District. Stacy asked if it would make sense to add a call-out box to define commercial uses like the section has for light industry. Shannon said it could be added. Given the amount of time already spent on the district, Alex asked if it would make sense to table discussion on the district and to move on to other districts. Rebecca suggested that as homework, everyone should come to the next meeting prepared to articulate what makes the three districts in question (Industrial, Commercial and Central Business) unique.

The Public District entry was reviewed. Alex questioned if the current reference to the Vergennes Graded School District was appropriate. Mel responded that it is not since it has dissolved. Everyone also agreed to add the new police station in the list of City-owned properties. Discussion moved to clarifying that while the State of Vermont owns over 300 acres of land within the city, only 66 acres is actually in the Public District, with the remaining acreage in the Agricultural District. Jason suggested that we add a small section about the recent solar array at the wastewater treatment plant.

In updating the Otter Creek Basin District, the group agreed to remove references to the "Gateway" and "Scenic Byway" projects as they are no longer in the first phase. Mel asked that we add a note that indicates the City now owns or controls by lease all properties on both sides of the river from the base of the falls to the municipal docks. It was also agreed to remove the last two bullet points in the entry. Shannon suggested that this would be a good place to add

information about the Community Visit program. At the Community Meeting held on April 16, 2014, approximately 100 community members voted on priorities for community action. Among the top-three priorities was to “Redevelop the Vergennes Falls Basin”. Shannon also said it might be a good idea to add an entry in chapter one of the plan to provide an overview of the Community Visit program moderated by the Vermont Council on Rural Development. Everyone agreed and Shannon said he would draft an entry for review at the next meeting.

The group then moved on to review the entries for the Flood Hazard Overlay District and the Archaeological Overlay District. It was agreed to address only grammar issues in these two entries.

The Commission then focused on updating the policies outlined for chapter five. Policy 2a was changed from “Update the zoning regulations to include....” to “Ensure the zoning regulations include....” Policy 2b was deleted. Policy 5 was updated to read, “Promote the preservation of important natural resources and open space.”

The group moved to revisions of chapter six. The reference to the Addison County Regional Plan was updated to the current plan adopted on December 14, 2014. The reference to development in Panton along Panton Road was deleted. Rebecca volunteered to draft a concluding paragraph to end the document in a more reader-friendly fashion.

The items listed in the appendices were revised; removing items specific to the 2009 plan. It was agreed to add the study compiled by the students at Middlebury College titled, “Cultivating Community through Sustainable Transportation: Proposed Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements in Vergennes, VT”. The final report from the Community Visit program when complete will be an appendix. Shannon asked everyone for photo submissions for the cover of the plan update, as well as to be embedded within the document.

The progress on the project schedule was reviewed and discussed. Shannon asked Mel about the mandated warning period for a public hearing at the Planning Commission level. Mel responded that it is 30 days and it includes the requirement to distribute the propose plan to adjacent municipalities. Jason asked if the time period was the same at the City Council level. Mel answered that the warning period at the City Council level was 15 days. It was decided that the Planning Commission would hold a special meeting on May 5, 2014 to review the updates and to finalize the plan with a goal of submitting a completed plan to the City Council in June.

Committee Updates:

Transportation: No update at this time.

Education: No update at this time.

Tree/Urban Forestry: Shannon stated that Leslie Hendricks representing the Urban & Community Forestry Program, who had addressed the Planning Commission at the March meeting, had submitted notes and questions to him. Shannon asked if Mike would agree to be the main point of contact between the Planning Commission and the Urban & Community Forestry Program. Mike agreed to help Leslie develop a Memorandum of Understanding to be discussed at the May regular meeting.

New Business: Jason brought up that the Development Review Board currently has one vacancy and will have another vacancy in August. He asked that if anyone on the Planning Commission has an interest, or knows someone who has an interest in being a member of the Development Review Board, to contact Mel for consideration. Mel added that the City is looking for alternate delegates to the Addison County Regional Planning Commission and that interested parties should contact him.

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mel Hawley, Clerk