

**CITY OF VERGENNES  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
SPECIAL MEETING  
MONDAY, MAY 18, 2015**

Members Present: Shannon Haggett-Chair, John Coburn, Cheryl Brinkman,  
Morgan Kittredge

Members Absent: Mike Winslow-Vice Chair, Tim Cook, Jason Farrell

Also Present: Mel Hawley, Zoning Administrator, R. J. Adler, Megan Kittredge

Shannon called the special meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Shannon introduced R. J. Adler, Solar Community Organizer from SunCommon. Mr. Adler presented information regarding SunCommon's Community Solar Array Program. Mr. Adler provided an overview of the concept which is designed to make participation in solar generation easy and affordable for those who might not have access to a suitable site on their own property. He wanted to bring this information to the planning commission as they may be well-suited to identify the most appropriate places within the city to potentially site a community solar array. The group asked questions regarding the details of how such projects work and how siting is currently determined, as well as the role of a municipality in the process. Mr. Adler stated that SunCommon has a map of appropriate sites and that he would be willing to come back at a later date to share that information with the planning commission. Shannon said he would like to preview the map with Mr. Adler, who agreed.

After Mr. Adler left the meeting, the group discussed the possibility of incorporating an energy plan in the municipal development plan. Everyone agreed this would be a good idea.

The minutes to the regular meeting of April 20, 2015 were reviewed. Cheryl moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by John with all voting in favor.

Shannon read an email he received from Barbara Bosworth who had attended several planning commission meetings earlier in the year. Ms. Bosworth thanked the planning commission for being friendly and helpful when she sat in on meetings. She reported that she received an A grade on her UVM history project and was about to intern at the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum in the nautical archaeology lab.

The planning commission continued review of potential regulation changes from the "parking lot" of items that have been cataloged over the past several years.

- Section 1204.4: regarding parking or loading spaces be no closer than twenty-five feet to the property line abutting the residential district. Shannon volunteered to provide draft language for review at the June meeting.
- Section 1204.5: no parking is allowed in front of the front face of the principal building. Parking may be allowed in side yards adjacent to the principal building only if allowed by the Development Review Board. Shannon volunteered to provide draft language for review at the June meeting.

- Section 1205: location and width of driveways. The group spent a great deal of time discussing this section with the hope of making the section less arbitrary. Cheryl volunteered to provide draft language for review at the June meeting.
- Section 1206: Open storage in residential districts. Again, the group spent a great deal of time discussing this section with the hope of making the section less arbitrary. Shannon volunteered to provide draft language for review at the June meeting.
- Section 1611.C: Dimensional standards regarding setbacks of 100 feet abutting residential districts. Mel related some hypothetical scenarios where property owners would not be able to submit any reasonable site plan given the setback requirements. Shannon asked if these setbacks were new to the 2012 regulations. Mel said they were in the 1981 regulations. Shannon suggested that the planning commission make a recommendation at the June meeting.

Shannon reported that he had updated the word document version of the regulations with track changes enabled to capture all the recommended changes thus far. The file was too large to email to Mel, so he provided a thumb-drive with the document. He noted that earlier it was suggested that the order of the zoning districts match the order in the municipal development plan. He said he hadn't made that change to make it easier to view the actual changes proposed. Mel stated it would be problematic given all of the formal decisions issued by the development review board to rearrange the order of the districts as many sections are referred to by number and the process of rearranging them would lead to confusion. He offered that it would be better to rearrange the order of the district in the municipal development plan to match the regulations. Everyone agreed.

The planning commission ended discussion of regulations and proceeded to the timeline for completion of the zoning and subdivision regulations update. Shannon and Mel outlined that they would like to have everything completed and submitted to the City Council no later than September. This would be a year after the plan had been approved. Everyone agreed this was a feasible timeline.

Transportation Committee update – Shannon stated that the Toole Design Group (TDG) had been selected as the consulting firm for the planning project under the Strong Communities, Better Connections grant. A kick-off meeting with TDG will be held in early June.

Education Committee update – Mel noted that he would be hosting a field trip for first graders from VUES and would give a basic overview of City government.

Stormwater Committee update – No update.

Tree/Urban Forestry Committee update – No update.

Materials Management Committee update – Cheryl noted that handling recyclable materials could prove challenging in the near future as the commodities pricing for the materials has plummeted in the last year.

No new business was brought up.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mel Hawley, Clerk