

**CITY OF VERGENNES  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
MONDAY, JULY 27, 2015**

Members Present: Shannon Haggett-Chair, Mike Winslow-Vice Chair, Cheryl Brinkman, Tim Cook, Jason Farrell, Morgan Kittredge

Members Absent: John Coburn

Also Present: Mel Hawley, Zoning Administrator; Maren Hill, State Outreach Manager – Vermont Safe Routes to School Resource Center; June Sargent, Principal VUES; Jay Stetzel, Co-principal VUHS; Megan Kittredge

Shannon called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and introduced Maren Hill, State Outreach Manager for the Vermont Safe Routes to School Resource Center. Maren Hill explained the Safe Routes to School program and its mission to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school; to make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative; and to facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption and air pollution in the vicinity of schools. She then explained the five “E’s” of engineering, education, enforcement, encouragement and evaluation that the Resource Center provides to schools and communities free of charge.

June Sargent mentioned that there was a study several years ago that included some of the safe routes to school concepts. She asked if anything was happening with any of those ideas. Tim pulled out a copy of the study in question – “Cultivating Community through Sustainable Transportation: Proposed Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements in Vergennes, VT” which was authored by students in the Environmental Studies Program at Middlebury College in 2012. Shannon said that he would send to anyone interested, a link to the ACRPC Resource Library to access the complete study. He added that some of the recommendations in the study are currently being pursued, including the City’s application to the 2015 VTRANS Bike/Ped Grant to extend sidewalk.

Maren Hill provided her contact information to June Sargent and Jay Stetzel and offered to work with both VUES and VUHS to explore options moving forward.

Next the minutes to the regular meeting of June 22, 2015 were reviewed. Morgan moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Mike with all voting in favor.

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

- Section 1609: Dwelling Units in the Central Business District. It was discovered that the only residential uses currently allowed in the CBD are professional/residence office (permitted and multiple-family dwelling (conditional use). This means that single and two-family dwelling units are not addressed. After some discussion it was agreed to add “dwelling units” under permitted uses in the section.
- Section 1611.C: Dimensional standards regarding setbacks of 100 feet abutting residential districts. It was discovered that several years ago when the planning commission created the new Residential/Limited Business District in the Meigs Road area, they limited the potential building envelopes for parcels in the abutting Industrial District. The group had a lengthy discussion focused on identifying parcels impacted and what might be the best course of action moving forward. Morgan suggested adding a tiered set-back. Shannon added that they could emulate the same kind of language agreed upon in June for Section 1204.4 which addresses parking and loading spaces that abut residential uses and includes the approval of the Development Review Board. Everyone agreed. Mike proposed that the Public District also use the recommended new language in regard to setbacks. He further added that a definition of “Residential District” be included in Article 1, and that it identify the following districts as residential: Medium Density Residential, High Density Residential and Historic Neighborhood. Everyone agreed.

Next Shannon asked if anyone had any questions or comments to the proposed changes made thus far. Cheryl noted a typo on page 107 in Section 1609.F.2.e in the new language regarding ground-floor residential uses in the Central Business District. Shannon said he would correct the error. With no other comments to the proposed changes, Cheryl moved that the planning commission set a date of September 28, 2015 a public hearing on the proposed changes to the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations for the City of Vergennes. The motion was seconded by Tim with all voting in favor.

Mel reported that he was prepared to recommend to the City Council at their meeting scheduled for July 28, 2015 that Jason Farrell, Mike Winslow , Tim Cook and Morgan Kittredge all be re-appointed to the Planning Commission for a two-year term. He added that he would also request an eight-month leave of absence for Morgan. Shannon said that he would also attend the meeting to support the recommendations and to answer any questions.

Transportation Committee update – Shannon noted that there was a Transportation Task Force meeting on June 30<sup>th</sup>. The group had worked on the VTRANS Bike/Ped grant application to extend the sidewalk on Main Street as far as Champlain Discount Foods. He said the group next plans to work on a sidewalk inventory.

Education Committee update – Shannon noted that for the sidewalk inventory he had contacted Jay Stetzel about possibly enlisting assistance from VUHS students who walk to school. Jay Stetzel responded that he would like to have the students help and that this would also tie into the safe routes to school discussion from earlier in the evening. Mel noted that Mayor Benton wanted to discuss sidewalk policy at the next City Council meeting and asked if Shannon would talk about the proposed sidewalk inventory. He agreed that he would present the subject.

Stormwater Committee update – Mike reported that Otter Creek Engineering was on schedule with the assessment of the Crosby Farm stormwater collection system and retention pond project and the anticipated completion date of that part of the project is early September. Jason asked Mel about system infiltration which led to a brief discussion on the wastewater treatment system.

Tree/Urban Forestry Committee update – Mike reported that the Basin Task Force hadn't met since June's planning commission meeting so there was no update.

Materials Management Committee update – Cheryl updated everyone on the schedule for Act 148 and reported that leaf and yard waste was the next piece being layered in and in order to comply with the law collectors will eventually need to take trash, recycling, leaf and yard waste, and other compostable items if they take any items. This may move the City to re-examine its recycling drop-off center.

No new business was brought up.

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mel Hawley, Clerk