

**CITY OF VERGENNES
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, AUGUST 22, 2016**

Members Present: Shannon Haggett-Chair, Mike Winslow-Vice Chair, Cheryl Brinkman, Tim Cook, Jason Farrell, Morgan Kittredge, John Coburn (at 7:15 p.m.)

Also Present: Mel Hawley, Zoning Administrator

Shannon called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He asked if there were any amendments to the agenda. No amendments were proposed.

The minutes to the regular meeting of July 25, 2016 were reviewed. Mike noted one typographical correction and Cheryl noted one formatting correction. Mike moved to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Cheryl with all voting in favor except Morgan who abstained as she was absent from the July meeting.

The Planning Commission reviewed discussion items from the July meeting. Shannon informed everyone he had responded to the letter from Ms. Patricia Emerson who lives at 125 West Main Street asking the Planning Commission to consider reclassifying her property and one abutting property from the Low Density Residential District to the Medium Density Residential District. He shared a copy of his written response which stated the Planning Commission would propose a change to Medium Density Residential District for the parcels to be included in the Municipal Development Plan update currently underway.

Mel then asked if the Planning Commission would also consider changing the adjacent Agricultural and Rural Residential District to Low Density Residential. Following a lengthy discussion, Mike suggested it would be better to wait until the next update of the Municipal Development Plan when there would be more time to obtain citizen opinions on the subject. Everyone agreed.

The Planning Commission next discussed the sidewalk inventory and improvement recommendations developed at the July meeting. Mel stated the next City Council meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, August 30th and discussion of the recommendations would be on the agenda. He asked if the listing of the high priority “hot spots” recommended to be repaired could be reorganized by location to make the document easier to use. Shannon responded the original document was on his computer and he would make those changes this week and would attend the City Council meeting to act as a resource for the discussion.

The Planning Commission next began to discuss items that should be considered as updates to the Municipal Development Plan.

- 1) Green energy map: The Planning Commission reviewed the updated green energy map. Shannon had manually updated the map to show existing and proposed solar energy projects

larger than 15 kW as polygons instead of as points. He also drew in the proposed Green Energy Overlay District in the Industrial, Low Density Residential, Public and Agricultural and Rural Residential Districts. Cheryl asked why the area where the “outdoor classroom” behind Vergennes Union Elementary School was included. Shannon responded he had excluded wetland areas as identified in the original map, and this area was not identified. Cheryl responded that it is identified as such on the Agency of Natural Resources map. Shannon said he had a copy of the map and would update the proposed map to exclude the “outdoor classroom” area.

Jason asked if it would make sense to include land located Green Street near Green Meadow Acres as part of the proposed Green Energy Overlay District. Mike responded in earlier discussions the Planning Commission thought it best to avoid more densely populated districts. He added results from the proposed solar survey may provide reason to include the area, but for now we should proceed with the district as outlined. Everyone agreed.

- 2) Solar survey: Shannon reported he and Mel made preliminary edits to John’s solar survey as discussed at the July meeting. Everyone agreed the survey should be posted on Front Porch Forum and any other social media sites accessed by members of the Planning Commission. Someone suggested having hard copies of the survey available at Vergennes Day sites. Shannon volunteered to coordinate printing and dissemination of the survey on Vergennes Day.
- 3) Strong Communities, Better Connections Grant Project: Mel provided copies of the July 29 updated draft final report for everyone to review. He expressed concern the report hadn’t been proof-read very well. He had gone through the report while on vacation and noted many minor errors that should be corrected prior to the report being finalized. He also reported he had asked Claire Tebbs of the Addison County Regional Planning Commission if Vergennes would be the “owner” of the report so it could become a living document which changes over time as recommendations are completed and new priorities emerge. He said Claire was checking with Adam Lougee, Executive Director of ACRPC, but he hadn’t yet heard back. Shannon said he would also contact Claire about ownership of the report. Everyone agreed Vergennes should have ownership of the document.

Tim asked how the report would be incorporated into the Municipal Development Plan. Shannon responded he would like to take many parts of the report and include them in Section 1.3 Community Involvement, just as had been done with the Community Visit Program in 2014. Everyone agreed this seemed a good place to include the information.

Next the Planning Commission discussed the timeline for the plan update. Jason asked when we wanted to complete the process. Shannon responded he would like to have a deliverable product ready for public hearing by the end of 2016. Jason noted there were only four more regular Planning Commission meetings scheduled in the timeframe. Cheryl asked what would occur over those four meetings. Shannon said the first step would be to have Mel send him a copy of the current Municipal Development Plan in word format. Mel emailed the document during the discussion. Shannon would then include all the changes discussed thus far and would bring those sections to future meetings so the entire Planning Commission could review and approve the proposed changes. Cheryl asked if there were anything the rest of the group could do in the

meantime. Shannon suggested everyone go through their notes to ensure no areas were missed that anyone thought should be updated. Everyone agreed.

Transportation items update – No update.

Education items update – No update.

Stormwater items update – No update.

Tree/Urban Forestry items update – Mike asked Mel if the meeting scheduled for the week of August 29th with Elise Schadler, Urban and Community Outreach Professional with UVM Extension had been confirmed. Mel said the meeting had been confirmed.

Materials Management items update – No update.

Under new business Shannon shared an email Mel had forwarded to him from Karen Horn of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns regarding an online survey from the Public Service Department focused on developing standards for Municipal and Regional Plans for Act 174. He asked if the survey was open for anyone to complete or if it was open for certain entities within the municipality. Mel said he would ask and let everyone know.

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mel Hawley, Clerk