

**CITY OF VERGENNES  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
MONDAY, AUGUST 24, 2015**

Members Present: Shannon Haggett-Chair, Mike Winslow-Vice Chair, John Coburn, Tim Cook, Jason Farrell, Cheryl Brinkman (at 8:00 p.m.)

Also Present: Mel Hawley, Zoning Administrator; Mike O’Daniel, Cathy Fuller

Shannon called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and introduced Mike O’Daniel and Cathy Fuller. Mr. O’Daniel was present to inform the Planning Commission of his intent to subdivide his property so that his daughter, Cathy Fuller and her husband Chris can build a house in the City of Vergennes. Mr. O’Daniel’s property is located in the Agricultural and Rural Residential District. He expressed concern that the current dimensional standards for the district appeared to be inconsistent with the policies outlined in the municipal development plan.

The current regulations for the district mandate that any one-family dwelling is only permitted as an adjunct to a primarily agricultural use. This appears to be more restrictive than the policies in chapter 5.2 of the municipal development plan which states that one-family residential development shall be permitted in the district, which does not adversely impact our city’s natural and scenic resources.

Mr. O’Daniel asked if it was possible that the zoning regulations for the district be updated to be consistent with the municipal development plan. Mel noted that the timing for this request was good as the planning commission was holding a public hearing on proposed changes to the regulations in September. Shannon advised Mr. O’Daniel to attend the public hearing on September 28, 2015 and present testimony to the Planning Commission, which then can be considered for a proposed amendment to the zoning and subdivision regulations. Mr. O’Daniel stated that he would attend the public hearing to do that. Mr. O’Daniel and Mrs. Fuller left the meeting.

The minutes to the regular meeting of July 27, 2015 were reviewed. Jason moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Mike with all voting in favor.

The planning commission continued reviewing potential changes in the regulations from the “parking lot” of items that have been cataloged over the past several years. Shannon noted that while the Planning Commission could no longer make proposed changes to the regulations as the public hearing had already been warned, the group could proactively discuss items that might be included in testimony at the public hearing and be prepared with proposed changes.

Section 1410. Calculating Coverage – Mel noted that the second sentence of the section, “Driveways and sidewalks are not included in calculating coverage.” Was potentially confusing

and more clarity might be achieved if the sentence was deleted. After a few minutes of discussion, everyone agreed.

Section 1603. Agricultural and Rural Residential District. Based on Mr. O'Daniel's testimony, the group compared the dimensional standards in the current regulations to the policies in the plan. Jason noted that the regulations are indeed more restrictive than what the plan calls for. The group discussed what changes would be consistent with the plan and determined that striking the phrase "as an adjunct to a primarily agricultural use" would be appropriate. In regard to lot area, the group determined that the guidance provided in chapter 5.2 on page 76 of the plan should be used. Shannon volunteered to draft new language for a proposed change to the dimensional standards for the district which could be considered if such testimony at the public hearing was given.

The group discussed the upcoming public hearing which will be held on Monday September 28, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the meeting room of the Vergennes Fire Station. Shannon asked that everyone on the Planning Commission be in attendance. He said the warning would be read at the hearing and then the group would take public testimony. Immediately following the public hearing, the Planning Commission would hold a special meeting to discuss the testimony given at the public hearing and make any additional proposed amendments to the regulations prior to submitting them to the City Council.

Shannon advised the group that there had been a meeting of the steering committee for the Strong Communities, Better Connections project on August 6, 2015. He shared drafts of posters that will be displayed throughout the area to generate public interest in the project. Mike added that there would be walking tours on a Friday evening in September to coincide with the Arts Walk and then there would be public workshops on Saturday morning to get public input and feedback on some connectivity ideas. There will be more information on this project as things develop.

Mel and Shannon updated everyone regarding the latest meeting of the Week's School Property Master Plan project. LandWorks will need to provide the state with a deliverable by August 31, 2015. Shannon noted that during the meeting, several members of the steering committee were hoping for a more comprehensive plan or perhaps an extension in time to develop one. Ultimately it was determined that such an expansion was beyond the scope of the contract and that if a more comprehensive plan was desired, the state legislature would need to approve. Shannon added that while the plan may not be what everyone wanted, there would likely be information in it that could be used by the Planning Commission for the next iteration of the municipal development plan.

Transportation Committee update – Shannon reported that the Transportation Task Force met on August 18, 2015 and had worked on a survey form and assessment criteria for the upcoming sidewalk inventory. He shared copies of the survey materials and said that Alderman Jeff Fritz had been in contact with staff at Northlands Job Corps to provide volunteer help in assessing sidewalks.

Education Committee update – No update.

Stormwater Committee update – Mike reported that Otter Creek Engineering was still progressing with the assessment of the Crosby Farm stormwater collection system and retention pond project and anticipates a recommendation in September.

Tree/Urban Forestry Committee update – Mike reported that Elise Schadler was trying to determine a good date in September or October to provide tree maintenance training for members of the Department of Public Works and any other interested parties. Mel said he would contact Elise with some potential dates.

Materials Management Committee update – Cheryl discussed how having the Town of Bristol joining the ACSWMD could be beneficial for all communities participating and stated that there may be possible grant monies to help with Act 48 compliance.

Under new business Tim asked if it would make sense to include an updated wastewater management section in the next iteration of the municipal development plan. Everyone agreed that it should be explored more fully. Mel informed everyone that the City Council would be reviewing and discussing the state's 1272 order for Vergennes at their next meeting scheduled for September 8, 2015 and he encouraged everyone to attend.

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mel Hawley, Clerk