

**CITY OF VERGENNES  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
SPECIAL MEETING  
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2014**

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

Members Absent: Rebecca Rey

Also Present: Mel Hawley, Zoning Administrator

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

The minutes to the regular meeting of August 18, 2014 were reviewed. Morgan moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Tim with all voting in favor except Cheryl and John abstaining as they were not yet members of the Planning Commission.

Shannon introduced the Planning Commission's two newest members, Cheryl Brinkman and John Coburn. The rest of the members introduced themselves.

Mel and Shannon informed everyone about the update in the proposed municipal development plan as directed by the City Council as a result of their public hearing on August 25<sup>th</sup>. The second bullet on page 84 was changed to read, "Residential uses are prohibited at the ground level, except where no portion of the residential use is at the front of the building and visible from the street. Residential apartments in combination with professional or artistic businesses as a conditional use shall be encouraged, above ground-floor commercial uses."

Jason expressed concern about the new wording. He contended that it might be interpreted differently than intended in light of entrances located at ground level that lead to residential uses on upper floors. Mel stated that the regulations as guided by the plan will need to make that clear to articulate the intent. Jason agreed. Cheryl asked about changing the language in the solid waste section. Mel explained the mandated process and that additional changes could not be made at this point without re-starting the public hearing process which would delay passage. Shannon pointed out that there will likely be a need to update the plan prior to 2019 and that changes could be proposed then. Cheryl agreed.

Shannon reminded everyone that the City Council had scheduled a public hearing on Tuesday, September 30, 2014. This will be the second of two legally mandated public hearings to hear public testimony on the proposed municipal development plan. Shannon asked that commission members attend the hearing if their schedules permit.

Mike updated the group on Urban Forestry Project. The student volunteers were in Vergennes for most of the previous week and they had done a great deal of work. He said they were able to assess all the priority areas assigned and will now go back to class for the next steps in the process. Their assessments will be available in the near future. Mel shared the thank you note sent by the students.

Shannon outlined the City's application for the Strong Communities, Better Connections Grant. The grant is a pilot program sponsored by VTrans. He explained that the grant administrators had been in Vergennes on September 19th to detail the grant process and provide feedback on the City's progress thus far. The application is due on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. The group asked if there was anything the Planning Commission could do to help. Shannon responded that our involvement would be needed over the next two years if we are awarded the grant. He did say that it would be good to have the Planning Commission empower him to write a letter of support for the grant application. Tim moved that the Planning Commission empower Shannon to write a letter of support. The motion was seconded by Mike with all voting in favor.

Next the group discussed priorities over next six months. Shannon said that he would like the group to tackle the "pending" items list in regard to zoning and subdivision regulations as well as aligning the regulations to the municipal development plan once approved by the City Council. He hoped that process would take three to six months to get the regulations ready.

Mel provided the group's "Rules of Procedure" in everyone's information packets. He explained that the group would need to readopt the rules at our November meeting. Shannon added that we should collectively review the rules in at the October meeting in the event that any amendments are proposed. Everyone agreed.

Tim asked about the committee work that had been put on the back-burner during the plan re-write process. He didn't want the work to be abandoned. Everyone agreed and Shannon stated that the committee updates would be included on future agendas as they had been before. There was no other new business to discuss.

The meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mel Hawley, Clerk