

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of September 17, 2018

Meeting was called to order at 7:07 PM by Chair Hill-Eubanks.

- I. **Roll Call:** Present for the meeting were Brown, Rhodes, Ruttenberg, and Hill-Eubanks. Also attending was Jonathan Spencer.
- II. **Set/Adjust Agenda:** Add items for road discontinuance, enhanced energy planning.
- III. **Public Participation:** Jonathan Spencer: Cheney solar project development.
- IV. **Road discontinuance:** The Select Board has been holding hearings on whether to discontinue certain Class 3 roads in Northfield. They have tabled the proceedings for now. The PC has the option of weighing in on the process if taken up again. PC members had the following comments: Concerns have been raised over the Kingston Road as it provides access to Paine Mountain recreation areas and this seems a valid concern; question as to whether some of the roads should remain to allow access to certain properties on those roads; perhaps the discontinuances should be made with the condition that they would not occur until the properties change owners. PC will add the issue to the agenda on the Transportation chapter and decide whether to provide comments to the Select Board.
- V. **Enhanced Energy planning:** PC decided not to pursue enhanced energy planning for Act 174. It would require a great deal of increased workload while we're in the middle of drafting the new plan. The energy chapter in the new plan will meet the requirements for energy planning under the new law and should ensure the town receives substantial deference in energy siting permitting at the state level. Enhanced energy planning could be pursued at a later date if the PC decides it's worthwhile.
- VI. **Night on the Common:** The Planning Commission will participate in the Northfield Night on the Common event on September 18. The PC will have posters and handouts on stream setbacks and buffers as related to flood resilience; and on renewable energy siting. Brown and Hill-Eubanks will staff a table and represent the PC at the event.
- VII. **Town Plan Update:**
 - a. **Energy chapter:** PC reviewed the first draft of the Energy chapter as written by the planner, which now includes Goals, Policies, and Tasks. Comments are as follows:

Siting constraints should be explained in the text or clearly explained on the map. PC decided it would adopt the State and Regional constraints, and Preferred Sites. Text should include information on where some of the language comes from so everyone understands why it's there (state law or policy, for example); easier for people to be comfortable with the ideas if they

are referenced. In Siting Standards section: Question as to who would enforce the screening requirements for net-metered sites – would we include the requirements in the zoning bylaws and DRB enforces? Where do the scale/size cutoffs in RE siting come from? For 2 MW wind projects, whether “to the greatest extent feasible” should be removed; change 2 MW to 1 MW to be consistent with state standards for utility scale. Ruttenberg suggested a PC member act as a liaison to Norwich U.

- b. Draft chapter distributions and public postings:** In order to speed up the update process, each PC member will be assigned a chapter to take the lead on. That will mean gathering information for needed data updates that the planner cannot find, working with the planner to update the draft as necessary and clarify any information as needed, taking comments from the other PC members, leading the discussion on that chapter, and distributing it to the public and interested parties for input. PC members are encouraged to review each chapter and send comments to the lead member well before the meetings. Chapter assignment for current review will be: Laura, Flood Resilience; Paul, Energy; Ruth, Transportation; Darlene, Housing. Future chapters will be as assigned previously.

VIII. Conferences:

IX. Approval of Minutes: August 20, 2018.

X. Other Business:

XI. Next Regular Meeting: October 15, 2018.

XII. Adjournment:

These minutes are subject to changes and approval at the next regular meeting, but are substantially correct.