

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of December 17, 2018**

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by Chair Hill-Eubanks.

- I. **Roll Call:** Present for the meeting were Commissioners Ruth Ruttenberg, Aaron Rhodes, Laura Hill-Eubanks. Also attending was Brandy Saxton, planner from PlaceSense.
- II. **Set/Adjust Agenda:**
- III. **Public Participation** (scheduled): Brandy Saxton (planner, PlaceSense).
- IV. **Town Plan Update:** Continue to review 1st drafts of chapters with planner Saxton.
 - a. **Transportation:** Discussion included the following items: Request from Lydia Brite to include certain Transportation items in the plan, primarily related to recreation and trail networks. Ruth will forward items to Brandy and send the PC members a copy. Ruth has received answers from the Town Manager regarding Transportation issues and has submitted them to the PC and the planner. Discussed the discontinuance of some back roads. There is a policy in the draft plan to keep town ownership of Class 4 roads. Option exists to keep Class 4 open, but not town-maintained. Discontinuing roads may cause issues with erosion, etc. if not well-maintained by users of the road. Add bike racks to priority needs. One issue to be decided is whether to encourage development along Rte. 12 and 12A south of the village. This may contribute to sprawl, and impact rural landscape. Focus of growth/development is in the village areas. PC will review the issue when we get to Land Use chapter and map. Mobile home parks in the area are an issue due to flooding. At some point there should be consideration given to buying out the parks that are vulnerable to flooding.
 - b. **Utilities and Facilities:** Request from Lydia Brite to include certain Utilities/Facilities items in the plan related to safety; and that the Conservation Commission continue to assist with management of the Town Forest. Add reference to the addition of the summit of Paine Mountain to the Town Forest. Send planner the Northfield Falls Stormwater study when received from town manager. Discussion as to whether trail-based recreation investments generate revenue. Planner advised that data seems to show that it may, but primarily when there are other amenities in town such as hotels, retail establishments, and restaurants. Discussion as to the amount of funding Norwich University contributes to the town government. It seems that more is needed, as the University owns a significant amount of the property in Northfield, and it is not taxed. A case was discussed in which a town decided to tax all residential property owned by the local University because it was not education-related property, and thus not required to be tax-exempt. Planner will review the amount of funds Norwich contributes to the town budget and send us follow up questions as to its use and amount of contribution over time.
- V. **Approval of Minutes:** September 17, 2018; October 15, 2018; November 19, 2018. Rhodes moved to approve the minutes of September 17, 2018 and October 15, 2018. Ruttenberg seconded. Motion carried 3-0-0. November minutes do not need approval as there was no quorum to conduct business.
- VI. **Other Business:** NCDN has asked that the community support the hiring of an Economic Development Director for the town. Tabled until January when NCDN will be attending the PC meeting.
- VII. **Next Regular Meeting:** January 21, 2019.
- VIII. **Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM.

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