

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of August 17, 2020
Planning Commission Meeting

In keeping with Governor Phil Scott's COVID-19 "stay at home" directive, the meeting was held remotely.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by Chair Hill-Eubanks.

Roll Call: Present for the meeting were Commissioners Laura Hill-Eubanks, Nancy Peck, and Aaron Rhodes, Chandra Blackmer and Ruth Ruttenberg; and was Clerk Mitch Osiecki.

Public Participation: None

Set/Adjust Agenda: None

Town Plan Update: The Select Board adopted the Town Plan at its meeting on Aug 11. Next step is a public hearing with the CVRPC, which is tentatively scheduled for September 8.

Assuming approval by the CVRPC, the PC will be eligible to apply for a Municipal Planning Grant to support the revision of Zoning Regulations.

One associated task would be to identify a consultant to partner with on this project. Mitch noted that the Department of Housing & Community Development (agency with oversight of MPG program), regularly keeps a list of consultants who offer services related to various types of grants funded by this program. Mitch has a list of such consultants current as of last year's funding cycle. He'll share it with the PC.

Commissioner Rhodes commented that housing is a goal he'd like to focus on. Commented that several years ago, NCDN had stated a long-term goal of increasing housing in the core areas of Northfield and to thereby increase the tax-base.

Commissioner Ruttenberg noted that the old schoolhouse in Northfield Falls is in the process of being converted into housing, and apparently the developer ran into regulatory hurdles along the way.

Commissioner Ruttenberg suggested the PC take some time to review current regulations and identify areas that are problematic, the PC would be in a much better position a year from now to apply for a

grant with a much more focused idea of which parts of the regulations are most in need of an update. At that time, the PC would be in a position to use a consultant more effectively.

Commissioner Hill-Eubanks agreed that taking some time to enumerate items that have been raised by residents could be a good place to start.

A couple of things that have been brought up are: review process for PRD's and PUD's, and the 3-acre vs. 5-acre minimum lot size in the low-density residential district.

Members discussed compiling a list of zoning concerns from various sources: minutes of public hearings, comments directed to PC members, and SB members.

It might also be useful to post to FPF and invite members of the public to pass along concerns they have. Clarification was made that this is not intended as a public forum – we will hold public meetings further down the road.

Commissioner Hill-Eubanks also commented that the Town Plan identifies a number of goals and objectives seen as worthy of pursuing over the life of the plan. It could be useful to extract these potential tasks/projects into a spreadsheet where they could be prioritized. It might be appropriate for various committees or other volunteer groups to undertake some of these, but lots of people probably don't even know they projects have been identified.

Commissioner Ruttenberg volunteered to take a shot at organizing a preliminary list ahead of the October meeting.

Meeting Schedule: After discussion, preference was to change meeting day from Monday. Wednesdays seem to work for all. 7:00pm appears workable. A proposal was made and agreed to by consensus to change the monthly meeting to the first Wednesday of the month, beginning in September.

Next Regular Meeting: October 7, 2020 at 7:00pm.

Approval of Minutes: Ruttenberg moved to approve minutes of July 20, 2020; Peck seconded. **Motion carried 5-0-0.**

Adjournment: Ruttenberg moved to adjourn; Rhodes seconded. **Motion carried 5-0-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:29 pm.