

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of November 4, 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 7:08 pm by Chair Hill-Eubanks.

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

Public Participation: None

Set/Adjust Agenda: None

Updates and Administrative Items: Some members of the PC may find it useful to have access to a printed copy of the final Town Plan. Mitch will print off as many copies as the PC needs. They can be available to pick up at the municipal building or Mitch can also arrange for their delivery -- whatever is convenient for members. Laura will give Mitch a final count of how many copies are needed.

Also raised was the possibility of ZA Osiecki giving the PC a brief update of zoning activity each month. Could include a summary of permits issued/denied, DRB agenda, compliance/enforcement actions.

Town Plan Implementation: Commissioner Ruttenberg suggested that the PC might want to "assign" certain tasks identified in the Town Plan (found among the Objectives & Policies at the end of each Chapter) to various groups (e.g., Economic Development, Conservation Commission, Recreation Committee).

The suggestion was made that the PC might review current regulations one chapter at a time (one Article per month possibly). The PC may find it useful to identify various individuals and groups who might have helpful insights to offer on particular sections of the regulations. The PC could invite interested parties to participate in a monthly meeting; alternatively, members of the PC could also attend meetings of those other groups.

As a first step, the PC might be interested in having Jon Ignatowski, newly-hired Economic Development Director, join the December meeting of the Planning Commission. Mitch advised that he's spoken informally to Jon about this; Jon would be happy to attend a meeting, make an introduction and answer questions.

Zoning Regulation Updates: There have been a number of issues raised already that the PC may want to consider with respect to revisions of zoning regulations (protection of Historic Districts, minimum lot sizes, PUD's and subdivisions, and the proper treatment of "tiny homes." Commissioner Ruttenberg also expressed interest in looking at how the town forest is zoned. Would like to explore whether the town can implement reasonable development protections. How do other towns protect their forests?

The observation was made that the PC should reach out to the CVRPC about what level of zoning regulation review they might be able to provide (and at what cost).

There is still sentiment among the PC to "encourage" development near existing infrastructure, and to discourage development in the more rural parts of town. The CVRPC may be able to offer language to help promote those outcomes.

Mitch will look for documentation of discussion leading up to the previous zoning regulation updates. It might be nice to understand reasoning behind why certain changes were or weren't made.

Next Regular Meeting: December 2, 2020 at 7:00pm.

Approval of Minutes: Rhodes moved to approve minutes of October 7, 2020; Ruttenberg seconded.
Motion carried 3-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.