

BARRE TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES FOR BARRE TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION

The Town of Barre Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on Wednesday, March 25, 2020 beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the Municipal Building, 149 Websterville Road, Lower Websterville, to consider the following.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Cedric Sanborn and Chris Violette

TELECONFERENCE:

Debra Pierce, George Clain, Michael Gilbar, and Bryon Atwood

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Charles Thygesen, Sr.

STAFF PRESENT:

Chris Violette (Present) and Cindy Spaulding (Teleconference)

OTHERS PRESENT:

None

1) **CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

Mr. Sanborn asked if there were any changes to the agenda. There were no changes.

2) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

February 19, 2020

On motion by Mr. Clain, seconded by Ms. Pierce, the Commission approved the minutes of February 19, 2020 as written. Vote 6-0-0.

3) **WARNED PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- a. Presentation of the proposed 2020 Town Plan. The proposed 2020 Town Plan which also includes the new Energy Plan. The proposed plan is a two-year effort by the Planning Commission to update the plan and add new statutory requirements.

Mr. Violette provided an overview of the Town Plan and its process as follows:

LAND USE PLANNING

- Land Use Planning really came about in the 1960s. That is when the state was looking to coordinate State, regional and local growth management.
- State Planning Goals and guidelines were developed in 1968 along with the Planning & Development Act (24 VSA Chapter 117), the bible with regarding to Planning and Zoning.
- Then of course Act 250 came to be in 1970.
- Many towns around the state were slow to get into the state required planning process.
- Barre Town began to really look into it in the late 1980s when they commissioned a joint study with Barre City.
- By 1991 some 67 Town citizens formed numerous committees to create the Barre Town Plan which to a large degree is the same plan we have today.

WHAT IS A TOWN PLAN?

Town plans, also called comprehensive plans, lay out a vision for the town for a decade or so.

A Town Plan has influence on many Town policies, ordinances, and Bylaws. For example, while not required to be included in a Town Plan, if the Town had a certain vision of how they want their Zoning to look, laying it out in the Plan is a good start.

Towns are not required to have a Plan. However, one is required if a Town wants to have any of the following.

- Adopt/update zoning, subdivision regulations.
- Apply for Community Development Grants
- State designations such as a Village Center or Downtown.
- To be considered during ACT 250 and Section 248 reviews.

Plans must also be approved by the Regional Planning Commission.

The Barre Town Municipal Plan (the "Plan") is a guide to long range land use and development in the Town and is a plan which reflects the vision and the values of its citizens.

By state law, town plans must be reviewed, revised and re-adopted every eight years or face expiration status,

The Plan lays-out goals, recommendations and possible policies for future growth and to do so in a comprehensive, coordinated and cooperative fashion while promoting the common good and respecting the rights of individual landowners.

Introduction:

Talks about the requirements to have a plan and what is required to be in it.

Elements and goals

- 1) a statement of objectives, policies and programs
- 2) a land use plan with subsections a-d
- 3) a transportation plan
- 4) a utility and facility plan
- 5) a statement of policies on the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas, scenic and historic features and resources
- 6) an education facilities plan
- 7) a recommended program for the implementation of the objectives of the development plan
- 8) a statement indicating how the plan relates to development trends and plans for adjacent municipalities, the area and the region
- 9) an energy plan
- 10) a housing element which includes a recommended program for addressing low- and moderate-income persons' housing needs
- 11) an economic development plan
- 12) a flood resilience plan.

GOALS

- 1) Plan development
- 2) Provide a strong and diverse economy
- 3) Broaden access to educational and vocation training
- 4) Provide safe, convenient, economic, and energy efficient transportation
- 5) Identify, protect, and preserve important natural and historic feature of Vermont landscape
- 6) Maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife, and land resources

- 7) Make efficient use of energy, provide for the development of renewable energy, and reduce emission of greenhouse gasses
- 8) Maintain and enhance recreational opportunities
- 9) Encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries
- 10) Provide wise and efficient use of Vermont's natural resources
- 11) Ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing
- 12) To plan for efficient public facilities and services to meet future needs
- 13) To ensure the availability of safe and affordable childcare
- 14) To encourage flood resilient communities

The Planning process Barre Town's history

Land Use Plan

Current and future land use development

Maps

Land use and land cover (map 4)

Forest integrity (map 11)

Facilities, utilities, and public safety (map 3)

Sewer, water supply, Town buildings, Town land, Library resources, cemeteries, recreation facilities, solid waste, and emergency services

Preservation

Scenic and historic, scenic preservation, resources to be preserved for recreational value, natural resources, climate and topography, forest lands, agricultural land

Educational facilities

The regional and our neighbors

Energy (separate from the Energy Plan)

- Introduces the Energy Plan as an addendum
- Energy Opportunities
- Energy Conservation

b. Review final edits

Mr. Violette mentioned the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) had previewed the draft Town Plan and had submitted its comments for consideration:

Land Use

Include language the Town seeks to pursue State Village Designation for any of the villages there should be language in the plan with regards to the town's intent. and Community Development (ACCD).

Barre Town may consider applying for village center designation through the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD).

Mr. Gilbar mentioned he was concerned that there would be strings attached to village designations and what consequences would apply. Mr. Violette stated it would provide benefits for village designations. Mr. Atwood explained it is setting the town up for potential future application for village designations.

Energy & Energy Plan (Addendum)

Mr. Clain suggested rewording the last sentence to the Solar Energy section of the Energy Plan: with concerns it was not strict enough to protect the hill sides and ridgelines.

Renewables shall not be sited so that they are predominately visible from hillsides or ridgelines unless determined to be preferred location by the Planning Commission and Selectboard and shall be sited to preserve open space.

(CVRPC) Energy chapter and Addendum Energy Plan: a. mention under “Visual Mitigation”: “Commercial solar arrays larger than 500kW would encompass a land mass greater than any other structure within Barre Town and even with somewhat rolling topography can not be screened or mitigated to blend into the town’s landscape or rural cultural aesthetics and are therefore prohibited.

Mr. Sanborn asked if there were any further comments. Commission members expressed their approval of the draft and complemented staff.

- c. Motion to approve the Town Plan as drafted and forward to the Selectboard

On motion by Mr. Gilbar, seconded by Ms. Pierce, the Commission accepted the changes to the final draft of the Town Plan to be submitted to the Selectboard for review. Vote 6-0-0.

Mr. Atwood explained the process of the Selectboard to adopt the Plan. The Selectboard has 30 to 120 days to hold two public hearings take action to adopt the Plan. If approved, then it would go to the Regional Planning Commission.

4) FOLLOW UP

No follow up

5) OTHER

None

6) ROUND TABLE

None

7) ADJOURN!

A MOTION was made by Mr. Gilbar, to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Pierce and so voted unanimously at 7:43 p.m. Vote 6-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Spaulding

Cedric Sanborn, Chair

George Clain

Debra Pierce

Chris Violette

Michael Gilbar

Byron Atwood

Charles Thygesen, Sr