

BARRE TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES FOR APRIL 17, 2019

The Town of Barre Planning Commission held its regular meeting on **Wednesday, April 17, 2019** beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the **Municipal Building**, 149 Websterville Road.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Debra Pierce, Cedric Sanborn (Chair), Chris Violette, Byron Atwood, Claire Duke, Charlie Thygesen Sr.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

George Clain

STAFF PRESENT:

N/A

OTHERS PRESENT:

Clair Rock, Zachary Maia; Both from the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

Agenda Item 1 - **CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

Mr. Sanborn asked if there were any changes to the agenda? Mr. Violette noted that approval of the minutes was inadvertently left of the agenda. He proposes to add approval of the minutes under other so that the guest in the audience can be heard.

Agenda Item 2 - **ENHANCED ENERGY PLAN**

Comments:

Mr. Sanborn opened the enhanced energy plan review and noted that there are two guests in the audience from the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC). Mr. Sanborn asked Mr. Violette to proceed with the review. Mr. Violette stated that he had finalized a preliminary draft of the Enhanced Energy Plan, fighting the formatting all the way, and sent a copy to Clair Rock and Zachary Maia of the CVRPC to review. Both Ms. Rock and Mr. Maia are in the audience tonight to go over their review of the plan.

Ms. Rock and Mr. Maia introduced themselves. Ms. Rock noted that Mr. Maia had reviewed the plan and he would proceed with the discussion. Mr. Maia handed out a written review (dated April 10, 2019) following a checklist that they use to review Enhanced Energy Plans.

Mr. Maia stated that by in large the checklist items are all met. The only thing he noted is that the section related to local constraints needs to be discussed. In the plan it is noted that class 1 & 2 wetlands and vernal pools are a local constraint. However, because all three are noted as known constraint within the State plan, they don't have to be included as a local constraint. Ms. Duke asked what the harm is in keeping them as a local constraint? Ms. Rock stated that she believed the harm could be that class 1 & 2 wetlands and vernal pools as noted in the plan more or less show some possibility of development, but the State plan has them as no development. Mr. Violette asked for clarification asking so what is being said is we don't have to include them? Mr. Maia said yes, in fact if we keep them in the plan as written it may end up undermining the State plan.

Mr. Maia went on further to explain that the deer wintering as a known constraint is the exact right area for this but identified bear habitat is a problem because it isn't discussed elsewhere in the plan. Mr. Sanborn discussed how members feel early on in this project there was a map showing identified bear habitat. Mr. Maia stated that he has seen a bear habitat map in the Town Plan. Mr. Sanborn questioned, then we can add the bear habitat map to the plan? Mr. Maia said yes. Ms. Rock cautioned that if that map is going to be used, we have to make sure it is discussed in the Natural Resource section of the Town Plan as well. Mr. Violette asked whether we'd use a separate map showing the bear habitat or would it get added to one of the others? Mr. Maia said that it would be added to the map showing possible constraints that also shows deer wintering.

Mr. Atwood asked a question regarding whether we should be noting that development in the deer wintering and bear habitat development is not possible, "it is restricted"? Mr. Maia noted that if you make an area unsuitable for renewable development, it has to be the same case for all development. Mr. Violette stated that you have to be very careful because he doesn't believe that bear habitat holds the same weight at the State level regarding development restriction. If we include bear habitat, we may be restricting all development. He further stated we really need to see the area that encompasses the bear habitat before we can decide whether to include it.

Mr. Sanborn asked what else we need to discuss? Mr. Maia stated that the rest of the plan is pretty spot on, he feels the narrative at the beginning is good. Really the only other comment he has is that the existing generation map is not attached to the draft plan but must be. Discussion took place as the why it isn't there, it was thought to be but regardless we just need to make sure it is for the final draft. The only other issue is the State wide preferred location map is not attached to the plan either.

Mr. Atwood asked when we formally submit this energy plan to the CVPRC, would it be the energy committee to review? Ms. Rock stated no; the Town Plan review committee will do the review. Following up with that, Mr. Violette asked whether there is a formal process to follow for adoption? Ms. Rock stated that it will be done when our Town Plan is adopted. Mr. Violette stated that based on that, there is no benefit to send the plan back to the RPC for review and confirmation because you won't review it until the Town Plan comes with it. Ms. Rock said that is correct. Mr. Violette stated then we'll have to work on the Town Plan and submit them together when the Town Plan is done. Ms. Rock said that is correct, we'd be submitted the Town Plan for approval of the Town Plan, confirmation of the planning process and certification of our Energy Plan.

Ms. Rock stated that the Energy Plan could be an appendix to the Town Plan, or it could be part of the plan. If it isn't desired to be in the plan, you can summarize the Energy Plan in the Town Plans energy section to leave it a stand-alone document. Mr. Violette asked what if there are duplications in the two documents, is that okay? Ms. Rock stated yes.

Mr. Violette asked Ms. Rock whether any municipal Energy Plans have been put before the Public Utility Commission yet to see how well the substantial deference helped the Town? Ms. Rock stated no, Mr. Maia thought maybe there had been something out of Chittenden County. Ms. Rock thought that what Mr. Maia is referring to the Regional Plan was used in that case, not a municipal Energy Plan. So, no, she is not aware of any plans being part of the Certificate of Public good process as of yet.

A lengthy discussion took place regarding the placement of renewable energy projects and how Towns are handling that differently.

Ms. Rock and Mr. Maia left the meeting.

Mr. Sanborn said that it appears as though our homework assignment is to overlay the deer wintering and the bear habitat and see where deer and bear overlap, then that would mean bear is out for development. Anywhere outside the deer wintering we'd have to review and find the locations that we do not feel development of any kind is feasible or desirable and include those areas as a known constraint.

Mr. Atwood asked whether he should call the CVRPC tomorrow to come up with the maps Mr. Sanborn mentioned so that we could look at the areas in question?

Consensus of the Commission is that we do not want the Energy Plan to be part of the Town Plan, we want a separate document. Ms. Duke asked what other types of plan we have that are connected like the Town Plan and Energy Plan that are not one document? She noted that sending people to several documents can make it difficult. There wasn't an easy answer to the question.

Mr. Sanborn asked how we wanted to handle the update of the Town Plan? Ms. Pierce noted that she has done some work on it already making obvious corrections. Mr. Sanborn asked do we want to chop it up and hand it out to members to work on like we did last time? Mr. Violette stated that he doesn't think we have to do chapter assignments, a few can work on it. This update will not be like the last one which was a complete rewrite. Mr. Sanborn said okay, if Ms. Pierce and Mr. Violette want to work on it and report back to the full commission that would be good.

Discussion took place as to when our Town Plan expires (May 27, 2019) and how long it would take to finish the update and what the ramifications are. Mr. Violette stated it would take several months to go through the update and the adoption process, if lucky maybe the fall and that without a valid Town Plan, Zoning or Subdivision Bylaws can't be amended and a municipality isn't eligible for Community Development Block Grants from the Vermont Community Development Program.

Ms. Duke wondered whether we should have a weekend session or sessions to try and expedite the process? Mr. Sanborn stated that there is a lot of research that needs to be done so it might make it hard to do it in long work session. Mr. Violette suggested let's see how it goes before we decide but weekend work session might be helpful.

Agenda Item 3 - **OTHER**

Approval of Minutes

March 20, 2019

Mr. Thygesen made a MOTION to accept the March 20, 2019 meeting minutes, seconded by Ms. Peirce, the Planning Commission unanimously approved without further discussion.

April 3, 2019

Mr. Violette made a MOTION to accept the April 3, 2019 meeting minutes, seconded by Ms. Pierce, the Planning Commission unanimously approved with some discussion related to who could vote and who couldn't based on attendance.

Agenda Item 4 - **ROUND TABLE**

Ms. Duke handed out a small poster that is used to document citizens that may need assistance in the event of a Town emergency. The form is called "Citizens Assistance Registration for Emergencies (CARE)" and she thought it might be helpful to use. Mr. Violette stated he could pass it on to those that are working on the local Emergency Operation Plan. He noted that one of the difficulties with these forms is keeping them updated.

Mr. Violette informed the board that his assistant Julie Kimball has resigned and had left Town employment.

Agenda Item 5 - **ADJOURN**

A MOTION was made by Mr. Atwood to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 p.m., seconded by Ms. Pierce and so voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Violette

Cedric Sanborn, Chair

George Clain

Debra Pierce

Chris Violette

Claire Duke

Byron Atwood

Charles Thygesesn, Sr.

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