



Brattleboro Planning Services

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Brattleboro Planning Commission

Monday, January 6, 2020

Minutes

Planning Commissioners: Felicity Ratte, Tom Mosakowski, Josh Steele, Kathy Urffer, Jessica Gelter, and Katharine Manthei Audlin

Excused: Prudence Mackinney

Staff: Andrew Graminski, Planning Technician

A. Meeting called to Order

Chair F. Ratte opened the meeting at 6:04 PM.

B. Announcements

No announcements were made.

C. Public Comments

No public comments were made.

D. Approve Minutes of December 18, 2019

Approval of December 18, 2019 minutes was moved to next meeting. There were not enough members present from last meeting to make a motion for this item.

E. Petition of Green Mountain Power (GMP) for a Certificate of Public Good (CPG) pursuant to 30 VSA §248 authorizing the rebuild of the North Brattleboro Substation

A. Graminski gave a brief overview of what a CPG is and how it applies to the North Brattleboro Substation. Neighbors of the North Brattleboro Substation were present at the meeting and gave comments and concerns over the rebuild. Their major concerns had to do with the lighting of the site and that they have asked Green Mountain Power to put up a temporary fence during construction.

T. Mosakowski discussed buffering and landscaping options for the rebuild of the substation and that a letter sent to GMP should reflect the Land Use Regulations that would apply. R. Fatte asked staff to reinforce what the neighbors have asked GMP in the letter as well. Commissioners had concerns that comments and recommendations made from them might not be taken in to consideration as last time this process came up at another location, commissioner comments were not applied to site development. Commissioners want the letter to reflect that concern and that recommendations made by the town should be taken highly. Staff will track the CPG process and keep commissioners up to date with the overall process. Going forward, staff will draft a letter, send to commissioners for review and then send to GMP.

F. Discussion of Zoning for Great Neighborhoods Memo

A. Graminski gave an overview of what the Congress of New Urbanism (CNU) memo distilled and what Zoning for Great Neighborhood program is. A. Graminski went on to say that the CNU

partnership with Vermont Department of Commerce and Community Development to review 6 Vermont municipalities, Brattleboro being one of them, examining potential zoning regulations that create barriers for additional housing development. The memo made recommendations on certain topics in Brattleboro' Land Use and Development regulations including recommendations for minimum lot sizes, maximum building footprints and a few other topics which were not discussed by the commission.

Commissioners discussed thoughts on minimum lot sizes including how the size of lots should be context specific and depend on area/zone, and that there will need to be further discussion with visual representations for the commissioners to review. J. Gelter brought up that the commission has already been discussing making changes to Brattleboro's density requirements and that the memo written by the CNU directly applies. J. Gelter recommended that this discussion be tabled to another meeting where draft code could be reviewed side by side with the recommendations made by the CNU. Commissioners agreed that the Planning Commission meeting planned for March will be set aside to review staff recommendations to regulation changes and that they will be examined with the recommendations made by the CNU.

G. Public Outreach Efforts

a. 250 Birge Street

A. Graminski discussed that future neighborhood meetings with members of the public will take place in the coming months which will address the potential uses this site could be when clean-up of the site is complete. He mentioned that the Conservation Commission is very eager to help with outreach events and that they are willing to take the lead. Planning Commissioners discussed that they are okay with the Conservation Commission taking the lead but to remember that the public needs to know that the site is directly in the Whetstone Brook floodway and that their will be quite the process with land transfer if that lands does go into the ownership under the Town.

K. Urffer made a motion to allow the Conservation Commission to take the lead on public outreach efforts for the use of 250 Birge Street with the understanding that the public will be informed of property constraints both natural and legal. K. Manthei Audlin seconded and the motion was passed.

b. Western Avenue Bike-Ped Scoping Study

A. Graminski informed commission that the Town has received funding from Vermont Agency of Transportation of \$32,000 matched with funds from the Town' department of public works of \$8,000 for a bike-ped scoping study of Western Avenue from the intersection of High Street and Main up Western Ave to Exit 2 interchange. Staff will work on an RFP to hire a consultant to work on the study. Commissioners wanted the RFP to reflect the exit 2 interchange and the possibly to look at the segment between exit 2 and the West Brattleboro bridge.

c. Bike-Ped Plan

A. Graminski told the commission that the Planning Services Department will begin looking into developing a town wide Bike-Pedestrian master plan. The plan will be conducted by staff and that the first 6-9 months will cover current conditions, data collection, a needs assessment and public outreach. J. Gelter recommend that the plan addresses safe routes to

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school, and J. Steele recommended that safety for bicyclist and pedestrians is examined and a part of the final plan.

H. Adjourn

K. Uffer made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by J. Gelter. Meeting was adjourned at 7:39 PM.