

WATERBURY PLANNING COMMISSION
Approved Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 10, 2017

Planning Commission: Ken Belliveau, Chair; Becca Washburn, Mary Koen.

Staff: Steve Lotspeich, Community Planner, Judi Byron, Secretary

Eric Vorwald, Senior Planner, Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC)

Public: Nick Waringa, Waterbury Conservation Commission; “Lefty” Sayah, Village Trustee

The Vice Chair called the meeting at order at 7:08 p.m. at the Municipal Center at 28 N. Main St.

AGENDA REVIEW AND MODIFICATIONS

Mary requested an addition to the agenda under Other Business, to discuss seeking applicants to fill the vacant positions on the Planning Commission.

COMMENTS FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Introductions were made.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Becca moved and Mary seconded the nomination of Ken Belliveau for Planning Commission Chair for the upcoming year.

VOTE:

The motion passed with a vote of 3-0.

Becca moved and Ken seconded the nomination of Mary Koen for Planning Commission Vice Chair for the upcoming year.

VOTE:

The motion passed with a vote of 3-0.

ENHANCED CONSULTATION ON THE WATERBURY MUNICIPAL PLAN WITH ERIC VORWALD OF THE CVRPC

The current municipal plan is set to expire in December, 2018. Eric’s consultation is in preparation for the revision of the Municipal Plan. Eric stated that the existing plan is in good shape as far as the statute is concerned and well thought out, though some sections were a bit wordy and there also could be improvement in specificity of language. An example he gave was in Objective 1 in the Natural Resources Chapter that addresses significant natural resources: what makes a resource “significant”? This was not clearly defined.

Steve asked for guidance regarding the implementation of the goals, objectives and actions that are further defined in the subdivision and zoning regulations. Eric pointed to the importance of details, using historic value as an example in Act 250 regulations. Steve gave an example of where applications for telecommunication facilities can be exempt from the zoning regulations,

citing the Verizon Cell Tower application. Ken suggested putting language in the municipal plan to articulate what we want or don't want.

In Eric's Summary Report, he pointed to the 2nd bullet under Weaknesses, stating that even though accessory dwellings were discussed, there were no action items promoting them as a way to address affordable housing needs. Ken said we should state in the plan update what we are already doing. The 3rd bullet encouraged map clarity and detail through increasing the scale. Eric pointed to Warren's online mapping where the option to zoom in and out is available. This can be an option in moving forward.

Regarding flood resiliency, again specificity of language was stressed. Having a Capital Improvement Plan, in addition to our Capital Improvement budget was discussed. Eric suggested one way to meet the PC's goals was simply to put it in through capital planning and gave the example of sidewalks in Colbyville meeting the goal of connectivity and access to shopping, etc.

In discussing opportunities (The Summary Document), Eric pointed out that statutory changes could possibly affect the plan, mentioning flood resiliency, the eight-year time frame for municipal plans, forest integrity and, renewable energy. The passage of Act 174 in 2016 allowed for enhanced energy planning. Eric encouraged the PC to decide where it wants to see renewable energy and where it does not, in other words if you restrict, it has to be equitable on both sides. For implementation, the statute was changed from five to eight years, with a four year check in. The Regional Planning Commission checks in with municipalities at that time. Eric stressed the timing of actions: long term goals are good and not everything has to be done at once.

Considering forest integrity, Eric pointed that forest integrity and habitat are part of the statute, but also reassured the Planning Commission that if these components are referenced in another areas, this does necessitate a rewrite.

Mary said that the PC needs to expand on the Natural Resources chapter. Eric reiterated that the Municipal Plan is in good shape with not a lot of updates needed other than those categories previously mentioned.

LOCAL ENERGY PLANNING PROJECT WITH CVRPC AND LEAP ENERGY FAIR REPORT

Steve reported that that a lot of interest was generated at the LEAP Energy Fair in regards to Act 174 and the mapping that Steve and Marian Wolz, Assistant Planner for the CVRPC, presented. The two maps displayed were for solar and wind which showed suitable areas for developing facilities as well as constraints and possible constraints. Eric Vorward encouraged the PC to enhance the Energy Chapter in the Municipal Plan and additional maps that that will meet the standards in Act 174 and result in the municipality being given "substantial deference" in the Public Service Board's review of applications for renewable energy facilities. A significant amount has already been addressed and Eric said it best to incorporate the Energy Plan into the already existing Municipal Plan. This way the document can move forward. Basically it is up to the municipality to decide where it wants to go with this planning process.

The discussion then moved to megawatt targets and megawatt hour targets in the recent Act 174. Due to differences in efficiencies of solar, wind and hydro, this new methodology is being used to take into consideration the conversion factors. Current energy use data will be presented by region and by municipality. Ken spoke of electricity data being easy to obtain, but another example of propane use will be an estimate. Eric said that all the energy data will be based on equivalent electrical use, with the goal to get to renewable standards of 90% by 2050.

The deadline for the region providing energy use data is April 30th for all municipalities, with draft local energy plans due by the end of July. The energy use data will provide a good baseline in reference to meeting the standards in Act 174. The local planning process is optional for the municipalities. Steve said he would want the public input process early. Then with the data, there would be time to look it over. The PC will take the lead on this with Waterbury LEAP in a supporting role.

Mapping was then discussed, showing where resources existed for wind and solar, where known constraints exist where wind or solar is not suitable and possible constraints where development may be possible but needed more evaluation. The regional constraints include areas above 2500 feet, within 250 feet of lake shores, slopes over 25%, and municipal land. These constraints are all shown with the remaining land being considered suitable for prime and secondary wind. Prime areas have all known and possible constraints taken out; secondary areas have all the known constraints taken out, but the possible constraints are included in the suitable areas. Regarding solar, Eric explained that the map shows the areas with constraints colored in and identifies suitable areas in a different color.

Two other resource maps, Hydro and Biomass, will be generated. Development of new hydro is difficult. Again it was reiterated that this energy planning process is not intended to prohibit renewable energy generation, but is to encourage the development of renewable energy generation facilities in suitable areas that are supported by the community.

Nick Waring, from the Waterbury Conservation Commission stated that though he is for renewable energy he also wants to see land conserved and significant natural resources, including the Shutesville wildlife corridor, protected.

OTHER BUSINESS

REVIEW & APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR MARCH 13, 2017

MOTION:

Becca moved and Mary seconded the motion to approve the Planning Commission minutes for March 13, 2017 with the changes specified.

VOTE: The motion was approved with a vote of 3-0.

PLANNER'S & ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORTS

The Zoning Administrator's report for the month of March was handed out and discussed.

UPDATE ON STATE PERMITTING ACTIVITY

April 18th is the hearing for the Verizon Cell Tower with the Public Service Board.

ADDED AGENDA ITEM

Mary put out an appeal for new Planning Commission members. Currently there are two vacancies. The business community was mentioned as a possible resource for applicants.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Judi Byron, Secretary