

Barre City Planning Commission

August 25, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Present: Michael Hellein (Chair), Amanda Gustin (Vice Chair), Joe Reil (Secretary), Rosemary Averill, Raylene Meunier, David Sichel, Becky Wigg

Absent: None

Staff: Janet Shatney (Director of Planning, Permitting & Assessing)

Visitors: Samantha Hiscock

1. Call to Order

The Chair calls the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

2. Adjustments to the Agenda

No adjustments.

3. Approval of Minutes

Sichel moves to approve, Reil notes a correction on page 3; the nomination for Secretary was listed as a nomination for vice-chair. Sichel accepts change to motion, Gustin seconds, unanimous in favor.

4. Public Comment (for something not on agenda)

None.

5. New Business

Hellein notes every item is marked for review or discussion, intending to establish baseline for future discussions/decisions.

i Review of the current ordinance constraints on residential development.

Hellein briefly describes packet and approach, providing context for the discussion. Main concern is residential districts, establishes elements that characterize residential restraints on development:

One is Dimensional tables, size of building, distance from property lines, etc., as well as restrictions on Dwelling Units per acre.

Second element is use restrictions, how parts of the property are used.

Third part is language around parking, spaces per dwelling unit/bedroom.

Discussion about possible changes, confirmation that what we're considering is increasing capacity for housing development.

Consensus is that we should carefully consider and discuss what and how much to tweak.

ii. Discussion of bylaw modernization grant application.

Hellein introduces that there is a grant available, with a deadline of November 1st. The state has created a resource for to help development that will help neighborhoods:

<https://accd.vermont.gov/content/zoning-for-great-neighborhoods>

Shatney notes that the application is available and she has begun reviewing. She will be writing a draft for a grant approval for the Commission to review later.

There was discussion about how we should consider the types of changes we want to see to discuss in future meetings and for the grant.

iii. Discussion of practical steps to support development of "missing middle" housing, leading to neighborhood site visit in subsequent meeting.

"Missing Middle" housing is development that used to be more common and involves more people living in apartment buildings or smaller family duplexes rather than single family homes or larger apartment buildings.

We should consider what changes we can make to encourage this. Moving boundaries was previously discussed, but what else can we consider?

Discussion about Revolving Loan Funds that can help address some problems with Missing Middle Housing and that Josh Jerome, former director of BADC may be a good resource as he's involved with a related program for Montpelier.

There was discussion about Overlay Districts, which can add details to specific areas of a larger zone and how they can reduce or add restrictions.

Shatney mentions that State of Vermont has an Overlay program called Neighborhood Design Area which can create neighborhood districts that can qualify for various incentives:

<https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/designation-programs/neighborhood-development-areas>

Site visits are proposed, so that we can consider suggestions discussed so far and visualize what the changes might be. Consensus is that we should visit two different locations, to get a look at two different areas rather than two similar areas. Beckley Hill area and Brooklyn Street are agreed upon.

- iv. Discussion of approaches to parking minimums to unlock development opportunities and review of planning best practices.

There was discussion about how parking minimums may be an easy change to affect the cost of development. We also need to consider options for Winter parking as more cars could be on the street if parking minimums are reduced.

We should invite DPW, traffic coordinator to provide their input as well for further discussions.

Shatney notes that an internal parking team met last week, and discussed winter parking options. There were proponents of more targeted winter bans rather than a blanket parking ban from November to March.

6. Confirm date of next meeting

- i. September 8, 2022.

This will be for our site visits as described previously, details will be in the upcoming agenda.

7. Staff Updates.

Many permit requests coming in for decks porches, sheds, etc.

In the last DRB, three applications, two approved.

Church asked to remove tiny house on West St, DRB denied. Church is petitioning to see if they can appeal.

105 No. Main Street, Malone Properties is renovating inside, refreshing outside and requested a façade improvement.

Barre Opera House requested lighting on façade of Barre Opera House/City Hall.

No DRB for September. One for October, AR Market wants to re-do their signage to add sign for Pearl Street Pizza.

Good Samaritan Haven wants to modify their permit to allow people to be inside during the day.

The Strategic plan for the City in progress. All Department heads are working with their consultants to ensure all projects are included. A consultant is also working on the Capital Improvement Plan.

Three applications for Senator Sanders' earmark requests have moved to the second round of review.

Cannabis edits are in progress, Council established a Cannabis Control Commission, comprised of the Mayor and Councilors.

Wigg asks if the Cannabis edits are the changes to Zoning related to Cannabis-related businesses, Shatney confirms that yes, that's what is being worked on.

8. Roundtable (

Wigg asks if we will be notified when previously approved items go to City Council, Shatney says yes, she will let us know when this happens.

8. Adjourn,

6:54pm, **Wigg moves to adjourn, Averill seconds, unanimous in favor.**