

Barre City Planning Commission

April 13, 2023 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: Peter Anthony, Vermont State Representative for Barre City

1. Call to Order.

5:30 pm.

2. Adjustments to the Agenda.

None.

3. Approval of Minutes.

- i. February 9, 2023 view draft minutes

Sichel moves to approve, Reil seconds, unanimous in favor.

4. Public comment (for something not on the agenda)

None.

5. New Business

- i. Update on current grants and RFPs

Both of the grants requested previously were awarded, at the level we requested.

The Bylaw Modernization, for \$27.5, to update zoning on housing. Shatney has the RFP ready for review, hoping to send soon.

The Municipal Planning Grant, for \$18K to update our North Main to Summer Street Plan. This RFP is in progress.

Further discussion around several other grants:

Bernie Sanders' earmark money, which the City has been granted, for a pipeline on Route 302.

A grant being requested by the Travel Advisory Committee that Bill Ahern submitted (Walkable/Bikable Routes to School Project).

CVRPC got funding for a project to do a traffic calming study on Berlin Street, between Route 62 and Main Street.

VTrans has released another possible grant, Bike and Pedestrian Grant Application, with an informal meeting coming up on May 3.

There was some additional discussion around how the current legislative project to adjust zoning Statewide could shape the Commissions work on the Bylaw Modernization Grant, and how our consultant will likely be on top of this. Peter Anthony indicated it's too early to know what the effects may be.

ii. Consider change to demolition conditions

Hellein notes that there is nothing to draft a motion on at this time for these items, these are just up for discussion to look at situations that have come up and consider possible changes.

Could we make demolition conditional across the city which would mean that requests would go to Development Review Board (DRB) for consideration?

There was discussion around what effects there may be if we set the same standards across the city. Considerations including whether the City should have a say in allowing demolitions. Some concerns are that just because a building is not demolished does not mean it will be rehabilitated, and, if this decision is put before the DRB, what standards will be provided to them to aid in that decision, will they be consistent City-wide or will there possibly be different guidelines for buildings in- and outside of the Design Review Overlay? Further questions/discussions around how the Vacant Building Ordinance might apply, how are other comparable communities in Vermont handling this, and whether this could be included in the Bylaw Modernization project.

iii. Consider parking lot as a primary use in zoning districts

Discussion around definition of primary use and what the advantages of this are and how this relates to parking lots. In downtown locations, parking lots must be an accessory use to a primary structure. Changing the standards could allow the City more control over when and how parking lots are added.

iv. Consider change to city-required parking minimums

Discussion around restrictions on minimum required number of parking spaces and considering removing them complete, though this may be impacted by legislative action. Suggestion that the stated goal of reducing congestion is misplaced and concerns around issues with year-round parking, as winter parking could impact this, as well as how other communities handle parking, were discussed. Possible

advantages to this change are that it would allow more freedom for development and there is a plan to review/adjust winter parking bans by the Parking Committee. Suggestion that this is an item that could come up in relation to the work on the Bylaw Modernization Grant.

6. Confirm Date of Next Meeting.

- i. May 11, 2023

7. Staff Updates.

- i. Shatney reports the hiring of a new Permit Administrator; discusses various DRB items, the Elks Club wants to install a patio, passed, DMS machine wanted to install a new flagpole, denied, Granite Museum at Depot Square subdivided and building is being sold to a Dentist, St. Monica is appealing demolition of their building on West Street. Discussion around other City business.

8. Round Table.

Shatney brings up that most current Planning Commission members' terms are expiring in June and discusses how to re-apply if desired.

9. Adjourn

6:50 pm, **Gustin moves, Averill seconds, unanimous in favor.**