

Barre City Planning Commission

September 14, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Present: Becky Wigg (Vice Chair), Joe Reil (Secretary), Rosemary Averill, Caitlin Corkin, Raylene Meunier

Absent: David Sichel

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

Visitors: Representative Peter Anthony

1. Call to Order.

5:30pm.

2. Adjustments to the Agenda.

None.

3. Approval of Minutes.

a. August 10, 2023.

Corkin moved to approve; Averill seconded; unanimous in favor.

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

Representative Anthony suggested removing parking minimums completely, a topic discussed in the past and urges us to revisit that idea, and would also suggest some change in City Policy on Winter Parking, suggesting something similar to Burlington or Montpelier's model, further noting that Winter Parking is part of the general ordinances, not Zoning, which would be out of the Planning Commission's purview, though we could make suggestions

Reil and Wigg brought up that we had discussed addressing parking minimums previously and that the Bylaw Modernization Grant that would be up for discussion would potentially include that item.

5. Old Business

a. Status of RFP's: responses due by 4:30 pm on Sep. 14, 2023.

There was one response from VHB (Vanasse Hangen Brustlin) engineers/planners for the Planning Grant (North Main to Summer Street revision plan) RFP. Details to follow on Monday of next week.

The Bylaw Modernization RFP did not get a response. Shatney is planning to apply to ACCD for an extension and send out a second RFP with a wider net.

There was some discussion about the possibility of seeing if VHB would be interested in adding the Bylaw Modernization Grant to their existing work.

There was further discussion on next steps for the No. Main to Summer Street plan, including having the RFP Subcommittee (Averill, Reil, Wigg) meet with VHB. Janet suggests that because there was only one response an interview is not necessary, we will consider further how to proceed.

- b. ADU public reading at Council on Aug. 29, 2023: Discussion.

Shatney summarized the previous Council action on the proposed ADU changes. On the 8/29 City Council meeting the motion failed due to lack of votes. On the 9/12 City Council Meeting a motion was made to rescind the previous vote, as the full Council was not present previously. That motion carried, and the first reading of the changes will be up before Council again on their 9/19 meeting.

There was some discussion about having Planning Commissioners attend the meeting to speak in support of the ADU and how it may or may not move forward depending on what happens at Council.

- c. North Main to Summer Street Plan: review and possible site visit.

There was general agreement about having our next meeting include a site visit and having VHB join us in this visit if they are available. Shatney will reach out to see if they can do so.

6. New Business

- a. Chair Resignation.

Michael Hellein has resigned as Chair of the Planning Commission.

- b. Election of Officers – election of replacement Chair.

Reil nominated David Sichel (in absentia, with his permission); Meunier seconded; unanimous in favor.

- c. Neighborhood Development Area Designation Discussion.

Shatney explained that an Area Designation allows the City to designate a portion of the city as a specific neighborhood and that once done this allows a number of possible benefits, including tax breaks for development, grants, etc. There was further discussion about the details of the plan and its benefits. Janet indicated that it's something she had worked on in the past and was hoping to do so again. Wigg suggests that Planning Commission

may be able to assist with this process and several members indicated their willingness to help with this.

7. Confirm Date of Next Meeting.

- i. October 12, 2023

8. Staff Updates.

Shatney indicates there is a lot of work remaining around the floodwork and grant work. Downstreet, Turning Point grants take a lot of time. She also noted that the Old Police Station in City Hall, which has been vacant has been renovated for the use by the Barre Up Long-Term Recovery Group and encouraging folks to stop by to see the space.

9. Round Table.

Reil mentions that with the previous resignation of Amanda Gustin and the recent resignation of Michael Hellein the Commission has lost a lot of institutional knowledge, with most members having served for less than 18 months, and that this is an opportunity and a challenge for all of us to step up our efforts and engagement.

There was some discussion about visitors attending the meeting who did not speak. Shatney indicated that guests do not need to be acknowledged or noted on the minutes unless they contribute to the discussion.

There was some discussion around the empty seat on the Commission and hopes that it will be filled soon.

10. Adjourn

6:14pm, **Averill moved to adjourn; Reil seconded; unanimous in favor.**