

# Barre City Planning Commission

## October 27, 2022 Meeting Minutes

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

Absent: Raylene Meunier

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

Visitors: None

### 1. Call to Order.

5:30pm.

### 2. Adjustments to the Agenda.

None.

### 3. Approval of Minutes.

- i. September 22, 2022 view draft minutes

**Gustin moves to approve, Reil seconds, unanimous in favor.**

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

None.

### 5. Old Business

- i. Approval of council's Bylaw Modernization Grant Resolution for application.

**Gustin moves to approve, Sichel seconds, unanimous in favor.**

- ii. Review of final draft of Bylaw Modernization Grant application.

Gustin asks if the amount of space in the boxes on the form are limited, Shatney confirms that they are.

Sichel has several suggestions, in different sections.

Project Description & Summary Overview section:

Add "Zoning" to first sentence, to read: ...Development Ordinance and Official Zoning Map...

Modify next sentence: ...examination of our community's preferences and needs and will identify ways to reduce barriers...

Community Need section:

Sentence beginning "Being able to expand housing": ...such as co-housing or and new development...

Sentence beginning "The consultant could assist": ...propose changes to zoning ordinance provisions that may hinder...

Later in the same sentence: "...updating our zoning in ways that could continue..." and removing the comma after Municipal Plan" later in that sentence.

Second to last sentence, fixed minor typo, Assessmenet:...called the "Housing Needs Assessment"

Last sentence: ...so that housing continues to sell and rent in the city...

Public Outreach section:

First sentence: "...outcomes from our Vermont Council on Rural Development All In For Barre process..."

For the Public Outreach section Gustin suggests to add a sentence talking about some of the specifics for Barre City's needs, regarding how the Barre City Population is particularly vulnerable to housing challenges and include current relevant statistics, such as poverty rate, cost burden of housing, turnover of housing, etc. Sichel notes that the Whitepaper that the Housing Task Force recently issued includes some relevant information.

Gustin suggests writing a sentence adding the relevant information to submit to Shatney for inclusion. Further suggestions to include that Whitepaper, as well as a recent BADC letter of support for the grant, as attachments to the application, Shatney agrees.

Gustin's suggested text to add to application (modified by suggestions from the Commission):

"Barre City's population is especially vulnerable to the statewide housing crisis. 23% of the population of Barre City lives at or below the poverty level and 43% are cost-burdened in their current housing situation (spending 30 percent or more monthly on their housing; in fact 20% spend more than 50% of their monthly incoming on housing), in addition Barre City has a high percentage of renters meaning many residents are especially in need of quality affordable rental housing, something especially scarce in the current crisis. Though Barre City's average rental unit rate is lower than County and

State average our high rate of poverty means that more of our citizens are still cost burdened by their housing."

In the Project Location setting Hellein suggests removing "easily", changing sentence to ...any section of the city is walkable or bikable.

Hellein has a suggested addition for the same section (modified by suggestions from the Commission):

An example of a potential area of focus would be unlocking infilled residential development within Barre City's existing street network by scaling density to reflect existing patterns of development in city neighborhoods and nearby development in adjacent municipalities.

Wigg asks question regarding the budget, noting a discrepancy in the total amounts listed on the two tables on Page 2. Some discussion around this and there is some confusion about the instructions for the form regarding the amount requested and the State of Vermont match. Shatney will call to confirm prior to submitting.

## 6. New Business

- i. Consider options for Municipal Planning Grant application, providing guidance for initial draft.

This grant would provide money for a specific (not too large) Planning activity. Hellein suggests that the 2012 Summer Street Plan may be a good option.

Sichel brings up a concern that there may not be time or staff resources to prepare another application. Shatney is willing to put in the work if we can identify a project.

Discussion around Summer Street Plan and suggestion that part of the grant request could be resources to bring it up to date, as well as discussion around the timing in order to get this to Council in time and to get the application ready in time.

Consensus to try moving this forward to discuss further in the next Planning Commission Meeting no November 10.

## 7. Confirm Date of Next Meeting.

- i. November 10, 2020

## 8. Staff Updates.

- i. Have received the Allen Street 45-day notice for a solar community out on Allen Street (details included in Agenda posted on the City Website).

Shatney suggests inviting them to a future Planning Commission Meeting.

Wigg asks what the Planning Commission's role is, Shatney responds that we are a required part of this process, though we don't have much power. Consensus is to have them on a future agenda.

- ii. Gustin asks about proposed demolition of Italian Baptist Church Property, as it is a National Historic Landmark. Shatney indicates the owner would likely not be able to proceed with the demolition. Discussion around making demolition conditional city-wide and how that would impact these requests and actions and possibly adding to our list of short-term changes.

9. Round Table.

None.

10. Adjourn

**Gustin moves to adjourn, Averill seconds, unanimous in favor.**