



# *City of Barre, Vermont*

## *“Granite Center of the World”*

Planning, Permitting & Assessing Services

6 N. Main St., Suite 7  
Barre, VT 05641  
Telephone (802) 476-0245

### **Planning Commission Meeting Minutes August 9, 2018 at 6:30 P.M. Conference Room, City Hall (6 N Main St)**

A regular meeting of the Barre City Planning Commission was called to order by Commission Chair Jackie Calder at 6:30 pm at City Hall. In attendance were Commissioners Michael Hellein, Jim Hart, and Ken Lunde, and David Sichel. Also in attendance were Planning Director Janet Shatney; Permit Administrator Heather Grandfield; consultant Brandy Saxton of PlaceSense; and visitors Barre Area Development Corp. Director Joel Schwartz; Michael Buzzi; City Manager Steve Mackenzie; and Mayor Lucas Herring. Chair Calder determined that there was a quorum for the evening.

**Adjustments to the Agenda:** None.

**Visitors and Communications:** None.

**Old Business:** A motion was made by Commissioner Hellein and seconded by Commissioner Hart to approve the minutes from the regular meeting held on July 26, 2018, motion carried unanimously.

A review of comments received from BADC Director Schwartz and other outstanding ones were discussed. Exemptions, such as handicapped ramps, elevator shafts, etc. are allowed in the draft to respond to concerns over nonconformities, and that there are ways to deal with them, like boundary line adjustments, etc. from other sections as written.

The Information Services category was clarified for understanding that this is meant to be similar to large server rooms, such as the Consolidated Communications building (fka Fairpoint) at the corner of Elm and Summer Streets next to the Elm Street parking lot.

A brief discussion of the dimensional table occurred, specifically building heights and the maximum height at 72 feet. It appears that many do not know that the current zoning ordinance caps the building heights at 72 feet in both the Central Business and Downtown Mixed Use Districts. City Place, at its highest building height excluding any architectural and roof-top elements is 65 feet, and Downstreet Housing's building maximum height excluding architectural elements is 42 feet. The draft ordinance mirrors the current building heights for consistency.

Next, density was talked about – the definition and the measurement of as far as zoning goes. Currently, the number of dwelling units is measured based on the set square footage per dwelling unit over the size of the parcel. Under the draft ordinance, dwelling units are measured by units per square foot of total lot area, with each zoning district having a different density requirement. Mr. Schwartz wanted to ensure that attached housing, like condominiums and townhouses would still be allowed. While there was some disagreement as to this new calculative way, this method has been left as is for now.

The design review criteria under the draft section 220 were questioned. These more descriptive criteria were developed from a request of the Development Review Board two years ago. The DRB then felt that the current design review standards for the design review district were too broad. Mr. Schwartz feels that there are too many “must” criteria, which it feels tight, stringent, and that developers will shy away from our city with these criteria. He explained that restrictions like having multi-faceted buildings were discouraging language. Chair Calder said that the intent is to preserve both those structures listed on the state and federal historic list. These would also hope to help those non-listed structures want to make improvements and encourage a better looking building.

There was also discussion on what criteria were for new structures and what was for modifications to existing structures within this design review criteria section, and that this section was confusing, and did not read well either. The consultant is going to work on the structure of this section to see if she can make it more understandable.

Campgrounds, roads and sidewalks were clarified for Mr. Fecteau’s comment under campgrounds, that he was confusing the subdivision requirements (if he wanted to develop a Planned Unit Development of some type, which PUD’s fall under the subdivision section) with the campground regulations that follow the other sections of the ordinance.

Director Shatney has some work to do on the mapping portion of the riparian buffer section and will get that to the consultant for review. She also needs to review the 10-foot distance rule regarding trash receptacles from a building.

EV Stations were then talked about, as Mr. Schwartz noted there was little language regarding them in the draft. It was made understood that under that EV stations, if put in off-street parking areas, are allowed as an accessory use in any zoning district. If a fueling station with gasoline pumps wants to add EV units for quick charging once that technology is made available, will be able to add them with only a cursory site plan review approval.

Under fees and filing requirement Section 410, the new paragraph regarding technical or legal review costs was discussed. At a previous meeting, it was agreed to add the word “reasonable” so that the sentence reads, “...the reasonable cost of which will be paid by the applicant.” Understanding that this is a new tool for the City to possibly use when reviewing applications and finding conformance with regulations, discussion was surrounded by cost, how the applicant would get notified, if there would be an escrow account for these types of occurrences, etc. It was agreed to add the words at the beginning of the section, “Upon notification to the applicant...” to help with this ability.

Mr. Schwartz brought forward other questions on the draft ordinance. He wondered about the Industrial zoning district on Burnham Street where the City public works and Capital Candy Co. buildings are. He explained that is a great area should a large developer want to get into that area. The Commissioners agreed that it is, and that they would like to leave it as designated Industrial for now. And, making a zoning change to the district map with approval by the Planning Commission for reasons agreed with would be a very easy revision and should not be thought to discourage development in this area.

He also questioned senior housing, assisted living and skilled nursing not being allowed in the UC-3 district. After a very brief discussion, the Commission agreed to change these uses from not allowed, to being conditional uses in the UC-3 zone.

**New Business:** A discussion with the Mayor regarding the timeline for the draft Ordinance ensued, that the Commission asked to have the Mayor reinforce the desire to have Councilors present at the August 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting so that comments and questions could be fielded, and that the timeline could be talked about

and understood. Mayor Herring said he would pass that message along, and Director Shatney said that the invitational memo to the Council will be put in this week's Council packet again as a reminder.

**Executive Session:** None.

**Roundtable:** Commissioner Lunde asked for a clarification of what a variance (use or otherwise) meant. Chair Calder explained that a variance is written for dimensional relief, and not for a use, that a use variance is actually illegal. While there may have been use variances granted in the past here in the City, they are illegal, and that language has been added to the draft regulations to affirm State Statute and to be clear for any reader of the Ordinance.

**Adjourn:** A motion to adjourn at 8:19 pm was made by Commissioner Lunde and seconded by Commissioner Hellein, motion carried. There is no audio recording of this meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Janet Shatney, Planning Director

DRAFT