

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes for July 18, 2019 at 6:30 P.M.**

A special meeting of the Barre City Planning Commission was called to order by Commission Chair Michael Hellein at 6:33 pm at City Hall. In attendance were Commissioners Rachel Rudi, David Sichel, Jacob Hemmerick and Jackie Calder. Also in attendance was Planning Director Janet Shatney. Chair Hellein determined that there was a quorum was present.

Absent: Commissioners Jim Hart and Rick Badem.

Discussion regarding the agenda occurred. Chair Hellein made the mention that he would like to take the Visitors and Communications item out from the beginning and place it toward the end. His feeling is that people attending the meeting may become de facto member of the Commission as they came at the beginning, and would like to make it clear who is the body.

Stated that the agendas will be a bit more rich in their description so that members of the public know exactly what is being discussed. Also, with the Chair and the Director meeting weekly, it is the intent to have draft agendas out on the previous Friday, and then the final agenda and packet out on the prior Tuesday of the meeting. That way, everyone has time to review.

Adjustments to the Agenda: None.

Visitors and Communications (for anything not on the agenda): None.

Old Business: The June 27, 2019 minutes were approved by a motion from Commissioner Sichel, seconded by Commissioner Calder. **Motion carried.**

Plan Work: Commission has not had a lot of time to go through the schedule that may dictate how quickly the Master Plan update is going to be done. Chair Hellein hopes to get the absolutely necessary changes out early in the process, and might want to change the schedule to reflect that, and trying to get a sense of what are the things that we absolutely have to change. Changes will be received by the Director so that the Commission can review and change; talked before about 'homework', but that is not going to occur, as we do not have a plan to do that together. Trying not to do things on the fly, and know what substantial changes that the Commission wants to make.

The schedule was reviewed. The Commission would like to do it fast and be able to move forward, and be sure to not take things out of context and not sticking to a plan. Chair Hellein doesn't want the Commission to be just a discussion group, but to need and want to make decisions.

Review of the final Land use items in "Next Steps" on page 2-40 occurred. As Commissioner Calder stated, of the three, two are done or gone, and the one remaining they are not sure what is going on with the third [Merchants Row, City Place, North Main to Summer Plans – did not discuss].

Commissioner Hemmerick asked if the schedule could be gone through, the goal to get this done and get it in front of City Council, and what would be the process. Chair Hellein interjected stating that the schedule most likely will be changed and we move forward. The Director outlined a portion of schedule, that there is previously discussed work that can be inserted now, and that she can move forward with outlining changes. Need to decide what needs to stay and what we can shed in the plan.

The expectation is that the Commission will review the draft as edited by staff, and will generate other questions and comments.

Calder asked about CVRPC review. The Director stated that she has their assistance as we move through sections that they will be reviewing

Chair Hellein asked does it make sense to go through section by section? Seems like it's the same schedule as what was outlined before, and really want to see the changes in place as draft so that the Commission has something to review, not review and come up with things as section by section goes by. The Commission could get lost in details, and seems that that is what happened during the previous master plan process [2012-2014].

Commissioner Sichel stated that there is a lot of value to know what we are going through prior to the meeting. Need to have enough time in advance to decide what the draft says and if it works or not. Need to have people read it ahead of time, and needs to be materials in advance.

Calder asked that if, after her own review, there were sections of draft that she had comments on, should she be writing them up and submitting them as an agenda item, or submitting them in advance of the meeting? Chair Hellein suggested to just bring those comments to that meeting. If everyone knows what they want to talk about at the meeting, it should be for good conversations. Commissioner Hemmerick would like to see a mark up prior to any meeting. With insights of the Mayor and fellow staff, the idea of having all that ahead of time will allow the Commission to move through the edits faster than before.

Public input, and City buy-in were discussed next. Need to have people come talk to the Commission. The Commission can write things, but if there is no public input then it's not a good plan. Sichel stated that it needs the Manager's input to ensure that City staff come to discussions with the Commission. Commissioner Hemmerick asked what would be most helpful. The Director stated that some, if not all might come to a meeting, but are we at that point yet? Getting City staff to attend a meeting is not essential for their input, but if they look at the plan, do they see things that are representative of their work and can be stated in the plan. Commissioner Hemmerick stated to perhaps have the Director coordinate with other city staff and bring forward those things to the Commission may work better.

The Director will dialog with the staff by asking them to go through next steps and maybe get more, and if the plan reflect your priorities? Is it consistent with your [city staff] goals and the five-year horizon of work? Once that is done, does it reflect the public input? Commissioner Calder said what is important is to read the plan, and comment on the plan. Don't need to march people in here, as it may not be productive but find out what their priorities are and have a discussion so that the Commission has something to review. Ultimately the Commission wants to do a good job with the update, but want to get it done as fast as they can - don't want to just "cool our jets" but do a good job, as we are plan-less. One part of this is to get input from department heads, that internal review. The second part is from the Planning Department to give input.

Third part is the public input and having a longer runway, not just for the Commission to do their work but to ensure that they are able to schedule and encourage public input during the input process. The Commission recognizes that these are 2 things vying for everyone's time, but it's good to get public input. May not get as much out of the public input as we want, but will do what we can to integrate it if received.

One thing that came up before is the Wednesday Farmer's Market and Concerts in the Park as a way to have a table there to have some input process. Chair Hellein is willing to sit and do it. Not a good sense of how to get people's input, or get people interested, but will try and match the plan with people's expectations of how the city is run and where it is going.

Commissioner Sichel brought back around the discussion from previous of what if the City Department Head's respond to the Director and she brings their ideas to the draft, then bring it to the Commission. It might make it a lot quicker, and the first draft closer to being done. Sichel believes that this process may make staff's workload easier. Respond by a deadline with the draft and then who has input and was offered the opportunity to dialog. The Director prefers to do a one-on-one. "I talked to...I asked...that she will synthesize what is said and suggested into comments back to the Commission.

Back to scheduling: Maybe attempt to stick with the current schedule but make more aggressive. The next sections are "camera-ready" for the next meeting, and see how it goes, or can we speed up. Next meeting, is one week away, the proposed process is not going to work quite yet. Commissioner Calder asked that for the next meeting, should we write back and say focus on one section more than another, or just stick to sections and comment on them? Chair Hellein said that we don't necessarily need to communicate in advance, but know what sections we are working on, to bring your comments to each meeting. There is no harm in emailing comments ahead of time.

Commissioner Hemmerick and public input. Is it going to be delegated? Doing table in the park the easiest thing to do? There might be some section of citizens that want to come up and talk about it or not? Are we going to get the input we need or want? Table thing a good idea, but is there anything else we could do? He has seen a questionnaire effective with a question similar to, "What do you like about your community?" "What would you change about your community?" Advertise that tabling will occur by FPF. Commissioner Calder asked if the questionnaires could be of value, and how would the means to the answers be synthesized. The Director could put surveys on the website, and being at the farmer's market is an act of engagement. What are the comments that you get and the things people are saying, is what the plan is saying in response to that.

Heritage Festival was talked about for tabling, but ultimately decided that tabling will not occur. Currier Park seems to be the best place to try and get input at the moment. Don't make it a **survey** so there is some result, and it's a box of paper and what did folks say. Commissioner Hemmerick suggested a word-cloud. Could see if the library would have an opportunity to allow for engagement strategies and feedback. Input opportunities. Need to be simple and broad and open-ended. Easy to do electronically, but perhaps harder physically, but there is help at the city to synthesize any answers. Could do on line surveys, music at the park, at the library. Concerts end mid-August, have a couple plans, and some questions that folks can respond to, so that people can look at them. Print the cover and put the web address on it? Bring back questions for next week's meeting to decide on. Motion to have Michael and Janet coordinate on what the three outreach questions should be for Wednesday, seconded by Jackie, motion carried. Janet to coordinate with Barre Partnership on the ability to table at the Wednesday Farmer's Market, and motion made by Sichel and seconded by Hemmerick to do so, motion carried.

We need to have some clarity about next week's meeting, but is still in flux, and less than one week for the Director to get things together isn't going to have anything ready for review as desired. Sichel asked about the public hearing on the 30th with the Council regarding the change in the zoning ordinance. The Director stated that she would welcome any one Commission member to attend the City Council hearing on July 30th, that would be great.

The Director asked one more question about public input – staff can put the input process on the city website, agendas, links to the Commission pages, and will be on Front Porch Forum, but does the Commission, or does the Commission want to get in front of City Council on a regular basis, once a month? Talk of its usefulness occurred, and that the Commission wants to keep the Council abreast of what the Commission is doing. Commissioner Hemmerick said if you can do your best to remove any excuse for not knowing about the plan then do it.

Chair Hellein said he was going to skip the land use review as two of them don't exist, but perhaps when the land use section comes up on the schedule it can be talked about then. So next meeting is the Introductory Section, the theme. The Director will try and add to it but will not be ready for the next meeting based on the process. Mayor Herring's comments and questions highlight something that need to be changed or doesn't make sense as part of the revision process, then decide if it's a question to then be discussed at the Commission level. We want to make targeted changes, we do not want to reform the plan.

Commissioner Hemmerick verified that the guardrails on this project are to maintain formatting and framework and go through and mark up and edit what needs to be changed.

The Director said she will come up with some kind of implementation schedule that can be followed with the 4-year visit during the 8-year Plan. Next step is accountability. Need some kind of abstract for implementation.

Benchmarks: Chair Hellein's feelings are in terms of accountability, Next Steps deliver our accountability, the benchmarks are busywork for somebody and the statistics are not things we can meaningfully affect and may not meaningfully reflect Barre City, and feels that these should be removed. Are people amenable to this change? Commissioner Sichel has pointed out accountability. Commissioner Calder recommends next meeting we decide about benchmarks? Question is what is the value of these, and how can someone meaningfully judge our progress with or without them? It does not need to be on the agenda, but open for discussion. Needs to be a measurable thing.

New Business: Staff showed the Commission what the next Development Review Board applications are about.

Adjourn: The Planning Commission meeting adjourned at 8:13 pm by a motion from Commissioner Calder, seconded by Commissioner Sichel. **Motion** carried.

There is no audio recording of this meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Janet Shatney, Planning Director