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2 **Regular Meeting of the Barre City Planning Commission**
3 **Meeting Minutes for February 11, 2021 at 6:30 P.M.**
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5 The regular meeting of the Barre City Planning Commission was called to order virtually by
6 Commission Chair Michael Hellein at 6:30 pm. In attendance, participating via the Zoom Video
7 Conferencing platform were Commissioners Rachel Rudi, Jackie Calder, Dave Sichel, Thom
8 Lauzon and Amanda Gustin. Also present via video was Planning Director Janet Shatney. Chair
9 Hellein determined that there was a quorum was present. Visitors included Tom Badowski, Berlin
10 Town Administrator, and Brandy Saxton of PlaceSense, consultant to the Town of Berlin.

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13 1. **Call to Order:** at 6:30 pm.
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15 2. **Adjustments to the Agenda:** None.
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17 3. **Public Comment** (*for something that is not on the agenda*): Chair Hellein noted there was
18 no member of the public in attendance, therefore there were no public comments.
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20 4. **New Business:**

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22 **A. Town of Berlin New Town Center Presentation for request of letter of support**
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24 Town of Berlin Town Administrator Tom Badowski and their consultant Brandy Saxton
25 gave an overview of their New Town Center (NTC) design and application, that was
26 submitted to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development on February 1, 2021
27 for consideration. Their overview included the Mall Road as being the main artery through
28 the area, the different developments, the requirement to have a civic building within the
29 development, a town green in the center, and the various sidewalk and stormwater
30 improvements needed. They spoke of the Central Vermont Medical Center's plan to
31 redevelop their campus, potentially add a sky bridge over Fisher Road, and the medical
32 campus development area within the New Town Center area. The ultimate goal of the
33 project is residential infill, with Downstreet Housing and Ever North [a nonprofit
34 organization providing affordable housing and community investments] already having
35 projects slated for the area. The NTC designation would give life to their concept plan of
36 the area that was presented. The senior housing building (Chestnut Place) next to Walmart
37 is under construction at the moment. With the usual permitting and Act 250 hurdles to
38 overcome, their vision is to provide 300-500 new residential workforce housing units, with
39 plenty of walkability, subsurface parking under the buildings, and public transit at the
40 ready. Not all will be subsidized housing, and Chestnut Place is going to be a market rate
41 senior housing development.

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43 Commissioner Lauzon made the motion that the Planning Commission offer a letter of
44 support, with its final draft to be approved by the City Council before sending to ACCD
45 and the Town of Berlin; seconded by Commissioner Sichel, *motion carried with Chair*
46 *Hellein voting against.*

To be approved at the 03/11/21 meeting

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5. New Business:

A. Approve meeting minutes: December 10, 2020: Chair Hellein asked if there were any changes or corrections needing to be made; hearing none, a motion was made by Commissioner Lauzon and seconded by Commissioner Rudi to approve the minutes from December 10, 2020, with no further discussion, *motion carried unanimously*.

B. Next Steps Spreadsheet Discussion:

The spreadsheet was reviewed, and prioritized with timelines addressed. So that in future meetings, it will be known what will be discussed, and appropriate individuals, staff and partners can come and give overviews, status and assist with next steps. This way, each of the steps in the plan gets time to be discussed, and then deciding if there is little interest, then it can be noted. Commissioner Gustin suggested that this way would be good to have some kind of mechanism for declaring things done as well. And the desire for the future meetings to be a work session and not a lecture is the goal. The Commission said they desire that if there is any material for a meeting, that the packet is desired.

Ultimately, it was decided that with the priorities chosen this evening, that only 2 topics get covered in a meeting, and the next 3 meetings are now laid out with topics for discussion and people to be invited to speak on. Meetings with their topics will be publicized via Front Porch Forum, Facebook, the Website, and ask that it be brought up at Council meetings.

C. Chair/Vice Chair Roles Discussion

Chair Hellein said that he feels he is not doing a good job as chair of the commission, and the company he is working for is in “survival mode” at the moment and needs to give his company more time and attention, and do more extra work, that he thinks that could help and could then survive. So, with limited time for the Commission, he said that he spoke with Vice Chair Sichel about switching roles to the end of the fiscal year, having him run the meetings. He would still participate as a Commissioner, but not in the active role as Chair, until sometime in the future he can resume, and perhaps become Chair again. The other Commissioners were in full support of the role reversal as a temporary basis, and everyone supported Chair Hellein in his personal duties.

6. Staff Updates: Along with what was provide in the packet, the Director stated that with the Assessor being terminated at the end of December 2020, that is fairly big news. There are 3 people interested, of which 2 resumes have been received, but they are unqualified, very green and would be on-the-job training; that the City-side reappraisal RFP is out there for review; the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) is still a work in progress, and the budget is always something to pay attention to. Commissioner Calder asked about the Recovery Residence

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92 application by Downstreet Housing, and that it is to be at 31 Keith Avenue, which is a 5-unit
93 apartment building with the “Hair By Us” beauty salon on the first floor.

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95 7. **Roundtable:** Commissioner Gustin thanked the Chair for sending out the training opportunity
96 to register, and that when she got to it, it was already full. For some reason the forum was
97 capped, and Commissioner Lauzon stated that he knew that the forum is considering doing it
98 again perhaps in June, as so many people wanted to join. The Assessor position was talked
99 about again, and knowing there are deadlines looming, the Director said that the city is doing
100 everything they can to get someone in that position for April 1.

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102 8. **Adjourn:** Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Lauzon and seconded by
103 Commissioner Calder at 7:55, *motion carried unanimously*.

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105 There is an audio and video recording of the meeting available. The meeting was recorded by the
106 video conference platform.

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Respectfully submitted,
Janet E. Shatney, Planning Director

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