

Barre City Planning Commission

June 10, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Present: David Sichel (Chair), Jackie Calder (Vice Chair), Michael Hellein (Secretary), Amanda Gustin, Thomas Lauzon, Rachel Rudi

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

Visitors: Jim McWilliams

1. Call to Order

6:30pm

2. Adjustments to the Agenda

No adjustments.

3. Public Comment

No public comment, Planning Commissioners introduced themselves.

4. Old business

A. Approve meeting minutes of May 27, 2021

Motion: Lauzon, Second Rudi, Approved

B. Continue discussion of role in Promoting ARP (American Rescue Plan) Funds for Housing

Lauzon gave synopsis of the introduction to the white paper being prepared by the Planning Commission, identifying challenges and opportunities. Gustin prepared an outline of the white paper, emailed to Commissioners, for the plan recommendations focused on affordable housing.

Shatney observed that she has heard housing sales in Barre are up 25% and that it looks like more from her perspective. David suggested the need for an executive summary of the white paper, while Hellein said the white paper as moved was meant to be a summary. Lauzon reiterated that the white paper should include a list of opportunities.

After suggestions from Calder and Lauzon, Sichel volunteered to meet with Shatney and Mayor Herring to discuss the white paper and next

steps. Gustin will synthesize Lauzon's introduction with her work into a single document, which will be provided to Commissioners a week before the next meeting (of 6/24). Any feedback will be provided via Shatney.

5. New business

A. MUTCD (Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices) Manual Reform & Citywide Traffic Calming, Green Streets, and Bike/Ped Plan

Sichel introduced a request from Councillor Hemmerick for the Planning Commission to provide input for public comment on the federal standards in the MUTCD, as its rules are more appropriate for highways than city streets. Lauzon observed that the MUTCD is out of the City's control. Hellein stated that State law does hold us to the MUTCD, but that it would be great if it were improved and to not to be handcuffed to it. Calder noted that the period for public comment is already closed. Sichel volunteered to talk to Mayor Herring and to reach out to the League of Cities and Towns about a letter that people across the state can sign on to.

6. Staff Updates

Shatney recapped the portion of the City Council meeting which addressed the recent Development Review Board decision to permit a parking lot where demolition of housing would occur. Lauzon said these decisions can be hard to balance, but the DRB made the right call. Hellein said the DRB didn't have much choice because demolition is permitted, but it will be good for us to consider whether changes to the development ordinance are needed.

Shatney reported that City Hall will likely be reopening by the end of June, and that the City Manager is pushing for meetings without remote participation. Discussion showed support for meeting in person, but that there is considerable value in allowing members and visitors to attend remotely. Shatney hoped it would be possible to use some funding to improve communications technology in the City Council chamber.

Shatney reported that there are applicants for the open seats on both the Planning Commission and the Development Review Board.

7. Round Table

No updates.

8. Adjourn

7:56pm, **Motion Calder, Second Lauzon, Adjourned**