

Barre City Planning Commission

June 24, 2021 Meeting Minutes

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

Staff: Janet Shatney (Director of Planning, Permitting & Assessing), Steven Mackenzie (City Manager)

Visitors: Lucas Herring (Mayor)

1. Call to Order

6:30pm

2. Adjustments to the Agenda

No adjustments.

3. Public Comment

No public comment.

4. Old business

A. Approve meeting minutes of June 10, 2021

Motion: Gustin, Second Calder, Approved

B. Continue discussion of Housing Whitepaper

Gustin provided whitepaper text in advance of meeting, and Sichel provided edits. Gustin described process of creating whitepaper, how she tried to include housing recommendations without sprawling out into related topics. Gustin asked if it would be appropriate to prioritize next steps extracted from the Plan, and Hellein responded that the current page order was good and Council was able to use their judgement to choose which to take action on. Hellein said that the document looked good and the edits were acceptable and that with another pass for grammar it would be ready to go.

McWilliam asked if we had done due diligence about demand for denser housing. Hellein responded that it's a good question, but not one we need to know the answer to today, because we can recommend what

works best in cities like Barre and learn in the future whether there are blocks that make that impossible. Sichel pointed out that we will learn about feasibility from individual projects. Gustin noted that some answers on demand come from the real estate sales data, but there are things we still need to learn.

Mayor Herring questioned whether the document would be helpful in its current form. There was lengthy discussion about how and whether to make the whitepaper more useful, and there was confusion about whether the discussion of housing policy related to ARPA funds distributed to Barre City (two tranches of \$850,000, per Mackenzie) or the significantly larger amount available for housing under the CARES Act. Sichel pointed out that the discussion originated from the CARES Act funding, and Gustin concurred that was the intent.

McWilliam asked Herring what he would expect from the whitepaper. Herring said he would want it to be clear how to connect funding sources to pay for the next steps summarized from the Municipal Plan. Hellein noted that we would typically expect a Planning Department to do that, noting Shatney was not supposed to magically make that happen, but should have staff to serve that need. Shatney said that she was currently looking into possible funding connections to the next steps and informing Mackenzie.

Sichel asked to place the whitepaper on hold until more is known about funding opportunities, and the members assented.

5. New business

A. City Council recommendations discussion from Council meeting Tuesday, June 22, 2021

Mayor Herring presented a list of items City Council requested the Planning Commission address:

- Municipal Plan Implementation Table
 - Assigning a RACI Matrix for items to move forward
 - Discussion on what items may need to be added/removed (i.e. Grocery Store)
- Signage in the Downtown (i.e. non-lit signs within a store's establishment)

- Demolition of property going before the DRB
- Items on the Council's Priority list (i.e. Neighborhood Development Area and Community Rating System, understanding the latter may be something that is not for them to address)
- Strategic Plan
 - Missing Pieces
 - Charter, Ordinance and Policy Review

Calder suggested looking at the list of suggestions from Council at our upcoming meeting so we can work out where to put these on future agendas, and Sichel agreed to put it on an upcoming agenda.

B. July meetings dates discussion

Chair and Vice Chair will not be available for July 8th meeting, so that meeting will be cancelled.

6. Staff Updates

Still no qualified candidates for assessor. Not much development in the city, possibly because of high prices for building materials. McWilliam was appointed to the Planning Commission (welcome!), Hellein was appointed to the Development Review Board.

7. Round Table

Hellein mentioned that he didn't mean to throw Gustin under the bus by criticizing the effectiveness of the whitepaper during discussion, because her work was very good. McWilliam concurred that the work was excellent.

8. Adjourn

8:01pm, **Motion Calder, Second McWilliams, Adjourned**