

# Barre City Planning Commission

## April 11, 2024 Meeting Minutes

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Present: David Sichel (Chair), Becky Wigg (Vice Chair), Joe Reil (Secretary), Rosemary Averill, Caitlin Corkins (arrived at 5:54 pm), Raylene Meunier

Absent: None

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

Visitors: None

### 1. Call to Order.

5:30pm.

### 2. Adjustments to the Agenda.

Reil suggested discussing recent Council agenda, where the Planning Commission was discussed, Sichel notes this will be incorporated into later agenda items.

Agenda corrected to show previous meeting as February 8.

### 3. Approval of Minutes.

#### a. February 8, 2024.

Wigg notes an error in Draft Minutes, "Averill" misspelled as "Averall".

**Meunier moves to approve, with revision, Averill seconds, unanimous in favor.**

### 4. Public comment (for something not on the agenda).

None.

### 5. Old Business.

#### a. Interim Zoning Changes Discussion

Shatney summarizes changes. To meet new State of Vermont requirements (S.100) only lot sizes (MU3 and R4) need to change. Discussing elimination of density, may result in more duplexes/apartment buildings.

Shatney suggests removing density and seeing where that leads us. Also provided sample of Montpelier zoning; allowing up to a certain number of units per lot as long as other requirements are met; and suggested we may

use something similar. Consensus was to try something similar, as it would have a similar practical effect and would be simpler. There was further discussion around the number of units to allow and consensus for six.

Sichel brought up setback requirements to discuss more in future, suggesting having some language about 'character of neighborhood' to avoid radically different setbacks may be worthwhile.

Suggestion to leave density alone, add a clause similar to Montpelier, and change lot sizes.

**Reil moves to recommend discussed changes to City Council, Menieur seconds, unanimous in favor.**

## 6. New Business.

### a. Flood Hazard Regulations: proposed changes

Shatney discusses FHR, normally handled similar to Zoning changes. We need to follow same process as for Zoning and can be handled as interim changes.

Suggested change to remove \$50K clause to be in compliance with FEMA regulations (this is the value of the structure only).

Fuel tanks, FEMA standard is to prevent flotation (can be anchored OR raised above flood levels). Current Barre City regulations say "and", should be updated to "or" to be in compliance with FEMA.

Homeowner can submit appraisal to show actual value to determine eligibility if previous appraisal is out of date. Sichel suggests adding language to indicate this should be at the homeowner's expense.

Wigg asks if this could be handled retroactively if someone could have benefited if the change were done earlier? Shatney reports that this isn't possible, it will be effective from the date implemented.

**Corkins moves to make the changes presented by Shatney and with Sichel's suggested revisions, Wigg seconds, unanimous in favor.**

### b. Meeting Schedule discussion

We have been meeting once a month with several recent meetings cancelled. City has insufficient staffing to hold more meetings.

The City Council had some discussion about how to address this. One suggestion discussed was to meet once a month with staff support and to have a second meeting without staff support, more of a work session. More work would be needed from Commission members.

Reil was in favor of this as a temporary measure. Averill and Meunier had concerns with time commitments.

Another suggestion was discussed, to possibly establish the fourth Thursday as a standing back-up if the regular meeting needs to be canceled.

Wigg suggests having some guided learning sessions to review regulations and documents so we can gain a better understanding may be useful. Some specifics were discussed, Zoning Regulations, City Plan, etc.

Sichel notes that the Plan was adopted in 2020 and needs to be revised in eight years. Some options and ideas were discussed.

Sichel suggests starting by adding a standing agenda item for discussing a chapter of the Municipal Plan and that this can be deferred if needed. There was consensus to begin during next month's meeting with the Introduction.

7. Confirm Date of Next Meeting.

- a. May 9, 2024.

8. Staff Updates.

- a. Prospect Heights development off Prospect St. Barre City applied to be invited to participate in a grant for up to \$3 million.

Sichel notes that he serves on the board of Prospect Heights Commission and BADC to inform of possible conflict of interest in future discussions.

The City currently has the option to purchase the property, good for up to one year.

Downstreet is getting started on Ward 5 School and Brummer Apartments.

A small developer who owns a lot off 6th Street, wants to put a 17 unit building in. Act 250 interfering. Looking at regulation changes to help it go forward and the state of project is unclear.

9. Round Table.

Summer St. Plan and Bylaw Modernization grants were discussed. Shatney is discussing the Summer St. Plan with consultants and the Bylaw Modernization project is still looking for consultant and will expire in December of 2024.

10. Adjourn.

07:00pm, **Corkins moves to adjourn, Averill seconds, unanimous in favor.**