

BARRE TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

The Town of Barre Planning Commission held their regular meeting on **Wednesday, March 15, 2017** beginning at **7:05** p.m. at the **Municipal Building**, Lower Websterville.

Members Present:

Cedric Sanborn John Hameline Charlie Thygesen Sr.
Debra Pierce Chris Violette George Clain

Members Absent:

Claire Duke

Staff Present:

Emily Marineau

Others Present:

Melissa Brown
Russell Brown

1) **CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

George would like to add to the agenda discuss Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission Municipal Energy Survey that was completed last month.

2) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The board would like the following type-o's corrected on the last page under number 5 OTHER: where it says "Chris in" it should be "Chris is", and where it says "as Carl" it should be "Ask Carl". With those changes they approve the meeting minutes. A motion to approve the February 15, 2017 meeting minutes by John, second by Debra. Meeting minutes approved unanimously at 1906.

3) **ZONED CHANGE REQUEST**

Request by Russell and Melissa Brown on 186 West Cobble Hill Rd to change the zoning of their 21-acre parcel from low density residential to high density residential (for discussion only)

Chris reported that Mr. and Mrs. Brown were here last month to request that the Planning Commission consider altering the zoning of their 21-acre lot from low density residential to high density residential. They met last month and after discussion the Planning Commission decided to come back to it this month. Chris has generated a report (attached) that would be required if they were going to move forward with the request. Chris notes he used the Town Plan to help write this report. Chris notes that you can find

both pros and cons to changing the zone and it would come down to the Planning Commission and what they feel would be better for the town.

Mr. Brown states that it is inevitable for the town to grow, and he feels that his land is the perfect opportunity for the town to grow. He states that they are close to town, they have sewer and water access to the land. Mr. Brown feels since his land is surrounded on 3 sides of high density residential zoning and the 4th side is a natural barrier with a brook that changing their property zone is a natural progression for the town. Mrs. Brown states that feels the zone change would makes the land more marketable since all 3 sides are high density and there isn't much land left up there for development. Mrs. Brown points out that there is access for town sewer and water.

John states that Mrs. Brown mentioned last month that they were going to get their land surveyed. John asked what the status of that was and if they had any reports.

Mr. Brown states that American Consulting Engineer Survey has come out to survey the property(they have markers out) but they do not have the final report yet. Mr. Brown also notes that he felt that breaking the house and land up would make it more affordable for people, therefore opening the house up to more people. Mrs. Brown also notes that they have not put the house on the market yet because they wanted to wait to see if they were granted the high density residential or not. Mr. and Mrs. Brown both state they aren't sure if someone would want to buy all the land or just the house and 2 acres.

John asked if there would still be enough road frontage with the house subdivided out.

Mr. Brown said that American Consulting was figuring out the exact road frontage but he currently has over 500 ft of road frontage and doesn't feel that it would be a problem. Mr. Brown states that American Consulting suggested that they might be able to use their current drive way as an access point for the land to avoid putting another driveway on the road.

Chris states that it would be possible if the land and house was bought by the same person who was doing the subdivision otherwise they would have to put in a new drive way for the land.

Mrs. Brown states they still just don't know what is going to happen to the land because they have not put it on the market and they will not be the ones who will be doing the subdivision. They are just asking for the request to change the land

Charlie states that he feels it is a good idea to change the zoning. Charlie feels that if we want to grow the town then changing the zone and getting some affordable lots on the market will help Barre Towns growth. He states that there is land for sale that is too expensive and people want to come here but can't afford the lot price.

Chris explains that now it is up to the board to discuss the zone change and decide if it will go on to a public hearing or if the board will decline the request then it will end here.

Mr. Brown states that they have hired an appraiser to come appraise the house and the land to help them have a better understanding of how much they should ask for.

Cedric states that it's a great concept to change the land to a higher density but this moment in time the town is not short of land, there is no need for it. People are not going out to seek land. The reason they are seeking the change in zone is they can gain more from it, possible. As a member of the Planning Commission I do not feel we can change the zone for someone else personal gain. If they were coming in asking to develop the land and had a plan in place, then now they have created a need for the change of zone and we could consider that change at that time.

John states if someone had bought the property with the intention to develop the land then they would wind up coming in for the zone change. At that time, we would look at the zone change because they would have done their homework and would have a good case for the argument to change the zone than trying to speculate on what might happen to land.

George asked the question if Mr. and Mrs. Brown have us change the zone then that would circumvent them having to go through Act 250. Chris states it would depend on the number of lots. Chris states that you can have under 10 lots and the 10th lot would then trigger Act 250. George questions if the land is more valuable than the house. Chris states that possible, if someone bought the land and put in 15 lots then it possibly could be worth more. Chris states back in 2008, a special committee looked at the zoning for the whole Town of Barre and rezones the areas that they thought needed. Chris states that it took about 7 years for the whole town to be looked at, and offered that if the special committee felt it needed to be changed then they would have done it at that time, secondly you would need to go back to the market demand, and right now it just doesn't seem to be there. As a commission, we have to look at many factors and use the Town Plan as a guide not just whether somebody just wants it.

George states that the Browns could use last month's minutes and give them to a potential buyer to look out to see that there is a good possibility that the Planning Commission would then put the wheels into motion to request a zone change.

Deb feels that the town plan was created because we should look at the town as a whole and you can't take individual lots and start changing each one separately. If we did that then we would lose sight of the biggest picture. Chris agrees that we must do what's best for the Town as whole. Deb states if they have a developer come in with drawings and can make a good argument on how it is good for the town then they would have something to go on but just for hypothetical situations there is not enough proof.

Cedric notes that there is plenty of lots down the road that haven't been able to sell because there isn't a demand for land.

Charlie feels that there are 3 sides that are already zoned that way and then they are stuck in the middle in a different zone. He thinks that it is a good idea for the Town to change the zone.

After lengthy discussion, they have concluded to not proceed with the discussion and make a motion.

Motion made by John and seconded by George; The Planning Commission declines to advance the request for the zone change request by Russell and Melissa Brown because there is sufficient appropriately zoned land for development at this time, there does not appear to be market demand, and there is no current plan for development of the land. However, the Planning Commission wants to be clear that there is potential for development of this land because of its proximity to high density residential zoning and the availability of municipal services including water, sewer, and paved class 3 roads. Those in favor of the motion: Deb, George, Cedric, John, Chris those not in favor Charly.

4) **MISCELLANEOUS:**

Chris brought in a few Zoning Bylaws that he would like to amend to coincide with today's standards. After discussion, the Planning Commission would like him to draft up the changes and they will review them at the next meeting.

5) **FOLLOW-UP**

Chris states that the survey was submitted to the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission Municipal Energy. He has not received a response back from them and they did not provide a printable copy for him to print.

George expressed his frustration that with the Select Board for just submitting their answers before the Planning Commission was done with their part, since it was supposed to be done in connection with the Planning Commission and the Planning Commission put in extra hours to complete the survey.

6) **CORRESPONDENCE:**

7) **ADJOURN:**

On a motion by Chris Violette, seconded by John Hameline, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting of March 15, 2017 at 9:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily Marineau

Cedric Sanborn, Chair

John Hameline

Charlie Thygesen Sr.

George Clain

Chris Violette

Claire Duke

Debra Pierce

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