

BARRE TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

The Town of Barre Planning Commission held its regular meeting on **Wednesday, August 17, 2016** beginning at **7:00** p.m. at the **Municipal Building**, Lower Websterville, to consider the following:

Members Present:

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

Members Absent:

Claire Duke

Others Present:

None

1) CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

None

2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

On a motion by Hameline, seconded by Pierce, the commission unanimously voted to approve the minutes of July 20, 2016.

3) WARNED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no public hearings held this month.

4) TOWN PLAN AMENDMENT(S):

Report of Chris Violette, Zoning and Planning Administrator

Included in your packet is a proposed amendment to sections 5.2 (views and vistas) and 5.8 (scenic preservation) of the preservation chapter of the Town Plan.

As we've discussed at past meetings, while we are waiting for specific guidance for alternative energy siting, we thought we'd take a shot at enhancing the preservation section which would likely get some deference with the Public Service Board.

What I've drafted is to get us started so that we can discuss it further. I've used a lot of what was drafted for the proposed energy section amendment. I also added some more specifics as to why views and vistas are so important to us.

What is hard though is coming up with a way to accomplish what we are trying to do but at the same time not hamstringing us later on for something else. In the end, protecting our views is important regardless of the project.

I look forward to discussing these proposed amendments and coming up with more ideas.

Discussion

Violette presented the proposed Town Plan amendment to 5.2 views and vista and 5.8 scenic preservation.

The board supported the proposed amendments to section 5.2 with a few minor changes.

Clain raised a question about how our plan can control how other towns may or may not protect views that affect Barre Town but which are outside of Town.

Violette and Sanborn tried to clarify that what the amendment is attempting to do is only laying ground work to control views from land within Barre Town. We acknowledge that neighboring Towns, such as those that host the Knox Mountains, control to the extent possible what happens with those mountains. Development of those mountains would definitely have an impact to Barre Town but we have no control.

Violette explained in drafting the proposed amendments he did look at Bennington's plan.

Clain asked for something a little more specific within the proposed amendment that notes the plan is only talking about impediments potentially coming from Barre Town.

Violette presented the proposed amendment to 5.8, and the board supported the changes with a few minor changes.

Violette explained that he used the 2 acre development limitation from opposing ridges after taking into consideration the size of both Bond Auto and H.P. Hood plants. Violette noted that any commercial/industrial project will be subject to site plan review already for far less than 2 acres of development according to existing bylaws so this new requirement shouldn't hurt the ability of businesses to go into or expand where viewed from opposing sides.

Clain wondered if we shouldn't insert something into the proposed amendment that limits the height of structures including renewable energy projects to no higher than what the height restriction is for the particular zone.

Clain also noted that he would like to discuss the tax issue with the Town Assessor regarding the Town's inability to collect taxes on a parcel as it relates to what that parcel might realize if developed conventionally as opposed to with renewable energy. He would like to see something added to the Town Plan that discourages a negative tax impact because of certain types of development.

Thygesen agreed with Clain but said there should be a benefit to the Town or property owners as opposed to a renewable project sending credits some other place.

5) FOLLOW UP:

Sanborn noted that he sits on the Vermont League of Cities and Towns' Quality of Life Committee and pointed out that this committee is going to be meeting with the Public Service Department to discuss the PSD's upcoming renewable energy Town Plan standards due November 1st.

Sanborn reiterated his desire to not wait for the PSD's standards before our Town Plan is amended. He thinks we need to get some new language into the plan sooner rather than later.

Sanborn thinks that because of the tight timeline he and Violette should meet soon to pull all the proposed changes together before the next meeting. Pierce offered to help out as well. The goal would be to work through the plan so that it can be cleaned up and sent to the Commission before the next meeting. This would allow the Commission to vote the document out for a public hearing in October.

Discussion took place regarding the timing and when meetings would have to be held to move these amendments forward by the end of the year.

Violette suggested having a special meeting on September 14th to go over the amended plan so if there are changes they can be made so that the document presented at the Commission's regular meeting on the 21st will be final and ready for a public hearing in October.

The Commission agreed to have a special meeting on September 14, 2016 at 6:00pm.

6) **OTHER:**

7) **CORRESPONDENCE:**

8) **ADJOURN:**

On a motion by Violette, seconded by Clain, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting of August 17, 2016 at 8:08p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christopher Violette

Cedric Sanborn, Chair

John Hameline

Chris Violette

Charlie Thygesen Sr.

Claire Duke

George Clain

Debra Pierce

DRAFT