

UNDERHILL PLANNING COMMISSION
May 1, 2013, 6:30 PM
Minutes

PC Members Present: Chair Trevor Squirrell, Irene Linde, Pat Lamphere, Jerry Adams, Dick Albertini, Cynthia Seybolt, David Edson

Staff Present: Planning & Zoning Administrator Kari Papelbon, Town Administrator Dawna Brisson

Guests: Selectboard – Brad Holden, Seth Friedman, Dave Rogers; Cliff Peterson and Helen Wagner; Peter Duval; Dan Clayton (departed before Public Comment period)

6:37 PM: Call to order

Chair Trevor Squirrell asked for modifications to the Agenda. ZA/PA Papelbon asked to postpone the briefing on the APA Conference to the next meeting.

Redistricting Project Discussion

Chair Squirrell stated that the Planning Commission had a debriefing with consultant Sharon Murray following Town Meeting. Sharon believes that the proposed zoning changes are valid and that the PC should move forward with the proposal, finding new ways of outreach to engage the public. The PC concurs with Sharon.

At the request of Chair Squirrell, ZA/PA Kari Papelbon provided a brief introduction and explanation for the joint meeting with the Selectboard (open dialogue, joint understanding of projects, etc.).

Discussion of the Redistricting Project ensued.

- SB Member Dave Rogers stated that education and outreach are good and suggested focusing on long-term planning rather than changing everything.
- PC Member Cynthia Seybolt asked for ideas for more outreach.
- SB Chair Brad Holden stated that he felt the PC did a good job with the outreach for the project.
- SB Member Seth Friedman suggested forming focus groups for each area affected by the proposal, similar to the process conducted in Portsmouth, NH.
- Dave suggested moving the meeting location to each area of the proposal and having a booth at Harvest Market.
- Seth suggested obtaining feedback from the vote via survey.
- Dave suggested sending out a mailer.

- Seth stated that some people may have felt rushed and recommended using Front Porch Forum more. It was stated that regardless of whether the process would have taken additional time that there might be a feeling that the projects was rushed due to lack of public participation and knowledge.
- PC Member Dick Albertini stated that he felt people missed the connection with the Town Plan. He suggested that the PC provide a synopsis of the Town Plan. It was also suggested that the PC provide more public education on the Town Plan.
- Brad echoed Dick's comments, stating that information on the Town Plan to educate the public on how it directs the regulations. He offered an example of how wind projects are of concern.
- A question was raised as to whether the Town Plan can be voted on rather than adopted by the SB. Discussion continued.
- PC Member Pat Lamphere stated that he feels a certain population thinks the situation of "us against them" exists. Such is not true as the PC members live in town. He continued to state that the PC has not gotten the message across that the PC plans for the community, for the "benefit of the whole, not individuals."
- Cynthia asked where land surveying fits into the process. Pat disclosed that he has an interest in at least one piece of land affected by the conversation. Brad stated that no ex parte communication had taken place.
- Brad explained that during the SB hearing on January 17 he saw something that "did not look right," which is why he voted against the redistricting change along the Ethan Allen Firing Range property. Afterward, he went to the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) and obtained the zoning map attached to the 1995 zoning regulations, which is the last hard-copy map CCRPC has. In the 1999 Town Plan there were new districts proposed as well as conceptual maps created by Grassroots GIS (Judy Bond). The zoning map was different than the 1995 map, which Brad stated he believes was due in part to errors in the digitization of the 1984 zoning map (which has measurements). From 1999, the zoning map did not change. Brad believes that the zoning district boundary follows the property boundary of the Range.
- It was stated that the Town should obtain a legal opinion to determine whether the error in the map attached to the adopted regulations since 1999 is official or whether the old map is still effective. Brad recommended hiring a surveyor to review all of the zoning districts on the map.
- ZA/PA Papelbon asked what Brad's opinion is regarding how to draw district lines. Brad stated that following boundaries wherever possible is a good idea, and that boundaries should also be based on State Plane.

7:34 PM: Sidewalks

ZA/PA Papelbon provided an overview of the proposed sidewalk project in the Flats. Due to fluctuations in engineer-submitted construction cost figures between January and April, and the exclusion of the engineering costs in the phasing plan, the budgeted amount for the first approved segment along Park Street is now less than half the estimated required project cost. Discussion ensued.

- While it may be possible to obtain additional funds and provide in-kind services to meet the required match, the grant is a cost-reimbursable grant. This means that the Town would have to put the money up front, which is problematic because the budget only included \$40,000 from the phasing plan.
- Cynthia asked the SB why they decided to move forward with Park Street first. Brad stated that the existing sidewalk is in poor condition and it is used the most.
- The PC discussed their rationale for recommending an asphalt sidewalk, which was a consideration for multimodal transportation (i.e., pedestrians, bicycles, wheelchairs, etc.).

Alternatives for moving forward include:

- Town doing the project at its own expense.
- Hybrid approach: Town provides some admin work (e.g., “hiring” someone with appropriate expertise as administrator – someone like Mike Weisel) using smaller grants with the benefit of potential lower costs.
- Seeking multiple grants to do the entire project at once instead of phasing. The benefit is that this may be more cost-effective.
- ZA/PA Papelbon will continue discussions with Bryan Davis, CCRPC, for other possible solutions.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

ZA/PA Papelbon stated that the PC is seeking input from Town departments, commissions, and committees to update the CIP. PC recommendations will be made to the SB by June 1.

7:59 PM: Future Projects List

Chair Squirrell tables the discussion of the Future Projects list in the interest of time. He asks the SB if they would review the list and provide comments for the next PC meeting, to which the SB responded that they would.

The Selectboard and PC thank each other for the meeting and agree that joint meetings should continue in the future, possibly quarterly. The SB and Town Administrator Dawna Brisson depart.

8:01 PM: Underhill 250 Celebration

ZA/PA Papelbon states that she met with Julie Campoli at the APA Conference in Chicago, and Julie agreed to let the PC use her tabletop density game. Discussions with the CCRPC to hold a similar density visualization exercise occurred in the meantime, with the agreement that participation during the June 8 event may not yield many participants (competition with other events on that day). Additionally, ZA/PA Papelbon stated that she had a brief conversation with Nate Sullivan regarding Bill Wilson's request for PC involvement. There will be several opportunities throughout the summer for the PC to participate in the 250 Celebration, rather than on June 8. ZA/PA Papelbon will follow-up with Nate regarding the PC's role in the festivities.

8:04 PM: Public Comment

Cliff Peterson, Hedgehog Hill:

- Suggest conducting a visioning session before proceeding with redistricting.
- Recommend the "easiest solution" rather than a "broad solution." Perhaps create subdistricts with different setbacks rather than the larger new districts as proposed.
- The process and proposal may be confusing to some people – explain more.
- Procedure is important. Mr. Peterson feels that the PC missed a step in the process when the SB rejected one of the proposals.
- It may be worthwhile to re-examine the notion of concentric circles of zoning and consider open spaces closer to centers.

Helen Wagner, Hedgehog Hill:

- Concur with Mr. Peterson re: visioning first.
- Proposals can be confusing – recommend tying the proposal back to the Town Plan.
- Town Plan via public vote may be a good idea.
- Education – provide numbers and more transparency with regard to density, hearing data, and intent of proposals to address fears and misunderstandings.
- Good maps are important.

- Perhaps there are other ways to deal with nonconformities, such as mini districts or a different, expedited DRB procedure for specific cases in the Centers.
- Provide more detailed explanations to address the “fear of the unknown.”

Peter Duval

- 2010 Town Plan – wrong turn, big, inaccessible and not understandable.
- 2003 Town Plan was better.
- Cynthia stated that part of the bulkiness of the Town Plan is due to statutory requirements.
- PC Member David Edson stated that the Town Plan has to conform with the Regional Plan as well as surrounding towns’ plans.
- Mr. Duval asked about the progress on open space planning, a parcel acquisition list, protection of the mountain, and the formation of an Economic Committee.

8:23 PM: Election of Clerk

Pat made a motion, seconded by Jerry, to nominate and elect Cynthia as Clerk. After Cynthia’s agreement to continue, the motion was passed by all PC Members present.

8:24 PM: Rules of Procedure

Cynthia made a motion, seconded by Pat, to readopt the Rules of Procedure. The motion was passed by all PC Members present. All PC Members present signed the Rules of Procedure (Readopted May 1, 2013).

8:25 PM: April 3 Minutes

Dick made a motion, seconded by Pat, to approve the April 3, 2013 minutes as written. The motion was passed by all PC Members present.

Scheduling

Dick and Cynthia stated that they will not be able to attend the May 15 meeting.

8:26 PM: Pat made a motion, seconded by Dick, to adjourn. The motion was passed by all PC Members present.

These minutes of the 5/1/13 meeting were accepted

This 22nd day of May, 2013



Trevor Squirrell, Chair

These minutes are subject to correction by the Underhill Planning Commission. Changes, if any, will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting of the PC.