

UNDERHILL PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, January 17, 2019 @ 6:00 PM

Minutes

Attendance

Planning Commissioners:

Commissioner Carolyn Gregson, Chair
Commissioner Johnathan Drew, Vice Chair
Commissioner Nancy Bergersen
Commissioner David Edson
Commissioner Pat Lamphere
Commissioner Cynthia Seybolt
Commissioner Sandy Wilmot
Commissioner Lea Van Winkle

Staff/Municipal Representatives:

Andrew Strniste, Planning Director
Kurt Johnson, Selectboard Member
Peter Bennett, Energy Committee Chair

Others Present:

Resident, Valerie Stori (33 Tupper Road)

[5:55] Members of the Planning Commission started to convene at Underhill Town Hall around 5:55 pm.

[6:01] Chair C. Gregson called the meeting to order. No public was in attendance to provide public comment.

[6:01] Staff Member Strniste advised the Commission that he was seeking another interpretation on the definition of dwelling unit – this time in regards to what constitutes a “separate” dwelling unit. Staff Member Strniste informed the Commission of a zoning permit application where determining what constitutes a separate dwelling would substantially alter the outcome of various issues that the applicant has encountered. Specifically, the applicant installed a kitchen in the basement area unbeknownst to Staff Member Strniste. When the kitchen was discovered during the Certificate of Occupancy site visit, he advised the applicant he would inquire with the Commission if removing the doors would thereby negate the assertion that the areas are separate living spaces. A majority of the Commission disagreed with that interpretation, and opined that the basement area, as described, regardless if doors were removed or not, constituted separate living areas.

[6:25] Staff Member Strniste informed the Commission that Peter Bennett from the Energy Committee had submitted follow-up information pertaining to the Beartown gravel pit and the tree removal action that occurred.

AGENDA ITEM: PROSPECTIVE COMMISSIONER INTERVIEW: VALERIE STORI

[6:26] Commissioner Wilmot asked when Commissioner Seybolt would step down, who advised that she envisioned a gradual process, which would allow for the exchange of materials.

[6:28] Ms. Stori provided a brief background: she has lived in Underhill for a little less than two years, on Tupper Road, where she and her partner conduct a Bread & Breakfast. She advised that she obtained a Master’s in Environmental Law & Policy from Vermont Law School, and currently works in Montpelier in the renewable energy field. Ms. Stori informed the Commission that she was involved in municipal government previously, and miss the aspect of community. She vocalized a strong interest in Land Use Planning. In response to Ms. Stori’s question, Chair C. Gregson advised that the Commission is currently working on the Town Plan, which will be

updated every 8 years going forward. Commissioner Drew complimented Ms. Stori on her background. He then opined that the opportunity should be opened to the general public to provide the most equity amongst residents. Everyone agreed that an advertisement for the anticipated vacancy should be posted on *Front Porch Forum* the following day. Should there be no interest/response, the Commission could nominate Ms. Stori the following week.

AGENDA ITEM: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

[6:35] Selectboard Member Kurt Johnson was before the Commission to discuss the capital projects that would be included in the proposed capital improvement program. He advised that the file server would still need to be added in the program, but otherwise, the rest of the program is largely infrastructure projects and equipment. Selectboard Member Johnson then provided an in-depth overview of the capital improvement projects, as well as the proposed funding mechanisms for each project going forward. He informed the Commission that the Town reserve funds went from \$600,000 to under \$100,000 over the past few years, thus preventing the Town from continuing with the status quo – using Town funds to pay for capital projects. Selectboard Member Johnson then advised that he anticipated the Town taking out loans in order to stretch out the amount owed, similar to the corporate model. He then continued to go into more depth about each project, answering questions along the way. Commissioner Seybolt inquired about grants. Selectboard Member Johnson advised that the majority of the grants would be structures grants from the State of Vermont. These grants on average were awarded the same Town approximately once every three years. Commissioner Wilnot inquired about obtaining additional funds from past damage. Selectboard Member Johnson answered that FEMA typically provides funds at present time.

[6:51] Selectboard Member Johnson continued to provide specifics about the various projects, and how he anticipated the Town paying for those capital project. A discussion then ensued about the possibility of adding a bike lane to River Road, as well as providing a safe travel route from Jericho to Cambridge. Selectboard Member Johnson then informed the Commission how he envisioned increasing money in the reserve funds. He then advised that there was a surplus from the previous year's budget, and that the Selectboard was contemplating, with the approval from the residents during Town Meeting Day, of allocating that money towards renovation of the upstairs Town Hall area, towards the reserve fund, and back to the residents of Underhill. Commissioner Seybolt inquired about obtaining equipment from Clark's. Selectboard Member Johnson advised that they obtain equipment through that business since there is already a State negotiated contract. He then clarified that the loans were 20 year loans, and that the infrastructure committee has tried to project beyond the 5-year horizon. Commissioner Lamphere advised that the information provided was the most they have ever seen.

AGENDA ITEM: TOWN REPORT

[7:13] Chair C. Gregson asked for assistance regarding the Planning Commission's Town Report. Commissioner Drew volunteered to provide Staff Member Strniste a few paragraphs to present at the next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM: TOWN REPORT

[7:15] Staff Member Strniste informed the Commission that thanks to Brian and Sherri, the Town Plan does not have to be a ballot item during Town Meeting Day, and therefore, the timeline for drafting the Town Plan is extended. Commissioner Drew informed the Commission that Peter

Bennett, the Energy Committee's Chair, recommended that he reach out to the Center for Rural Studies (CRS) to assist with the survey. Commissioner Drew advised that CRS may be able to assist with constructing the survey and analyzing the survey; however, he will inquire with them upon talking with them. He will also inquire about how fast they can turnaround a survey/assistance, and if there are any associated costs. Commissioner Wilmot recommended that a question be added to the survey pertaining to composting trash; specifically what residents may be doing currently, and what they would like to see the Town do. Staff Member Strniste advised that all survey questions should be submitted by mid-February in order for the survey to be distributed during Town Meeting Day. A discussion then ensued about how to yield the best response rate without any duplication.

[7:30] Staff Member Strniste advised the Commission to keep organization tasks top of mind in order for them to be completed shortly after Town Meeting Day.

[7:31] No members of the Commission advised that they were unable to attend the next regularly scheduled meeting – January 24, 2019.

[7:32] Commissioner Drew made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Seybolt, and approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Andrew Strniste, Planning Director

The minutes of the January 17, 2019 meeting were accepted this 31st day of January, 2019.


Carolyn Gregson, Planning Commission Chair

New Action Items

Forum Group: Each forum group write as many survey questions as possible and submit them to Staff Member Strniste as soon as possible.

Old, Incomplete Action Items

- Staff Member Strniste: Provide materials pertaining to the zoning pamphlet in the coming weeks.
- Staff Member Strniste: Providing a map of where the capital projects are located.
- Staff Member Strniste: Obtain a report on how Selectboard Member Johnson derived at the funding sources (i.e.) for the identified capital projects.
- Commission: Review memorandum from Transportation Board.
- Commission: Continue to review Town Plan sections that were volunteered and develop presentation materials for discussion at upcoming Planning Commission meetings.

Completed Action Items

Staff Member Strniste: Obtain Answers to the Questions About the Solar Array