

Town of Woodbury Planning Commission

April 20, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Planning Commission Members Present: Thomas “Skip” Lindsay-Chair; Michael Gray, Jim Schweithelm, Ph.D.

The “virtual” meeting was called to order at 6:06 PM.

Adjustments to the Agenda: None

Public Comment: None

Welcome New Planning Commission Member

The Planning Commission welcomed Jim Schweithelm, Ph.D. to the group. Jim brings a wealth of planning and analytical experience to the team and his practical knowledge will prove invaluable as we move forward with finalizing the Town Energy Plan and the crafting of an up-to-date Municipal Plan.

Both Michael and Skip presented Jim with an overview of the work activities to date and the challenges and opportunities that the Planning Commission will confront in the next several months.

Skip noted the draft Town Energy Plan (Plan) is a document prepared by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) in the fourth quarter of 2019 using 100% grant monies from the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development. The Plan was presented to the Planning Commission by the CVRPC at the December 16, 2019 meeting.

Draft Energy Plan:

- Continue Review and Edits

Skip displayed the “latest version of the draft Plan which included edits based on the document review during the February 17, 2020 meeting. In addition, changes to the Plan that were completed on March 10 and April 13, 2020 were scrutinized as well.

The entire Plan was examined in order to acquaint Jim with the document and the issues with regards to assertions and goals associated with the Thermal Sector Conversions per Target Year. Here’s a table that the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) believe is applicable to Woodbury:

Table 8 Thermal Sector Conversions Per Target Year (Residential and Commercial)			
	2025	2035	2050
New Efficient Wood Heat Systems (in units)	1	0	8
New Heat Pumps (in units)	42	107	204

However, the Woodbury Planning Commissioners do not agree with the CVRPC in their forecast that number of “New Efficient Wood Heat Systems” will total nine over the course of 25 years while 353 “New Heat Pumps” are forecasted over the same period. Several residents have come forward and expressed their disagreement as well. Note that Table 3 in the Plan estimates 58.4% of the homes in Woodbury currently use wood in some form for home heating.

Table 3				
Current Municipal Residential Heating Use				
Fuel Source	Municipal Households (ACS 2011-2015)	Municipal % of Households	Municipal Square Footage Heated	Municipal BTU (in Billions)
Natural Gas	0	0.0%	0	0.00
Propane	81	19.7%	141,648	8.50
Electricity	10	2.4%	18,160	1.09
Fuel Oil	60	14.6%	85,352	5.12
Coal	0	0.0%	0	0.00
Wood	240	58.4%	415,864	24.95
Other (Includes Solar)	20	4.9%	36,320	2.18
No Fuel	0	0.0%	0	0.00
Total	411	100%	697,344	41.84

This table displays data from the ACS that estimates current municipal residential heating energy use.

The Commissioners noted that Woodbury is significantly forested, and recognizes the importance of supporting the local logging businesses and regional economy. The Commissioners would like to exceed the proposed targets for New Efficient Wood Heat Systems, as these systems would provide a larger benefit to the Town in the energy and economic sectors. The Commissioners will still pursue and support a transition to cold climate heat pumps if their demonstrated efficiency improves.

TOWN PLAN PROJECT:

- Funding Sources:
 - The voters at Town Meeting authorized the expenditure of \$10,000 earmarked for planning assistance with creating the new Town Plan. Skip noted he plans to reapply for a municipal planning grant in the third quarter of 2020 as well.
- Overview of Request for Proposal (RFP) Document
 - Skip displayed a draft RFP for discussion. The draft contained information provided by the Town Treasurer with regards to applicable insurance coverages a vendor must possess in order to submit a proposal.
 - The Commissioners reviewed several documents produced by the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) including the

Municipal Planning Grants RFP Template and the DHCD Municipal Planning Manual-Module 1. Within these documents the commissioners were able to glean the “required elements” a Municipal Plan must possess in order to be approved. The required elements will become the basis for a statement of work in the RFP. Jim will work on preparing the statement of work.

- Note that approval is a four-part process;
 - First-Approval by the Select Board
 - Second-Approval by the Regional Planning Commission
 - Third-Approval by surrounding Towns
 - Four-State approval
- The Commissioners will work on the RFP and produce a draft for review at the May 18, 2020 meeting.
- Project Time Line Discussion:
 - Skip displayed a Municipal Plan project GANNT¹ Chart that outlined tasks, subtasks, resources, dependencies, and milestones associated with the project. Skip will adjust the start and complete dates based on the release of the RFP.

The meeting was adjourned virtually at 8:07 PM.

Next Meeting:

6:00 PM May 18, 2020 in the Community Room at the Woodbury Town Library or virtually using the ZOOM cloud-based meeting application.

¹ GANNT Chart: A type of bar chart that illustrates a project schedule.