

TOWN OF WOODBURY
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: February 21, 2022

Location: Virtual Meeting via Zoom Conferencing

Start Time: 6:00 PM

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

Members of the Public Present: None

The meeting was called to order at 6:09 PM.

Adjustments to the Agenda: None

Skip called the meeting to order at 6:09 P.M and announced he’ll not be seeking reappointment to the Planning Commission when his term expires on March 1, 2022. Skip noted he will steer the adopted Town Plan (Plan) through the Select Board approval process and beyond.

TOWN PLAN-FINAL APPROVAL PROCESS

A discussion ensued regarding what’s next in the approval process for the Plan. The Plan was adopted during the December 20, 2021 Planning Commission meeting and was subsequently submitted to the Select Board and Town Clerk at a December 27, 2021 Select Board meeting.

State rules compel the Select Board to hold one public meeting between 30 and 120 days after receiving the Plan. The Select Board has until April 26, 2022 to hold this public meeting. A discussion regarding the impending changes to the make-up of the Select Board ensued and how the changes could impact the Plan’s approval.

CVRPC CONTRACT(s) CLOSE-OUT UPDATE

Both contracts with the CVRPC expired on December 31, 2021. Final billing was received and payments have been made.

Closeout of the 2021 Municipal Planning Grant is ongoing with Skip completing narratives and forwarding documentation as required by the Department of Housing and

Community Development (DHCD). Closeout work is scheduled for completion on February 24, 2022.

NEXT STEPS

The commissioners reviewed and discussed a document crafted by Jim titled “Implementation Program Priorities”. The well-crafted and thought-out paper set forth implementation priorities and strategies based upon the Implementation Program contained in the Plan. Excerpts from Jim’s document include:

Getting Started:

- Refamiliarize ourselves with the Implementation Program and reach a common understanding of what each objective and action means in practical terms.
- Determine which tasks we can legally work on while waiting for formal adoption of the plan.
- Reach a common understanding of how much time and effort we are willing to put into implementation so that we can tailor our activities accordingly. Better to do a few things well than a lot of things poorly!
- Appoint a champion for each goal from among the PC members. The champion would draft an implementation approach for the goal and provide leadership to move it along.
- Begin drafting a detailed implementation road map for each goal.

Implementation Priorities:

- Zoning: A revised Zoning Ordinance would provide a strong foundation under many of the goals/objectives. Given the legal complexity and public interest associated with this task, it seems prudent to get started mapping out how to approach it.
- Highspeed Internet: Given that this is a prerequisite for community and economic development, and that there is currently political momentum and funding behind it, we should lend support and assistance to this effort.
- Community Development: This is another complex task that would require detailed planning that could be supported by ARPA funding. An example might be a wastewater feasibility study and engineering design for Woodbury Village. Applying for Village Center Designation is also an important step to unlock grant funding, but dependent on plan adoption. Given the strong desire for a community meeting place, getting working on that also seems to be a priority.

The commissioners agreed that seeking the “Village Center Designation” should be priority number one followed by a review of the existing zoning ordinance with an eye towards a complete re-write of the ordinance which was created in 1973 and sporadically amended.

Seeking a Village Center designation is critical as it supports the revitalization efforts as identified in the Plan. The designation brings financial incentives, training, and technical assistance needed to attract new business and vitality to Woodbury as well. The update of the Zoning Ordinance is imperative and will serve to bring the document in line with State statutes and reflect the changes in land use as defined in the Plan.

Broadband deployment remains largely in the planning stages. Michael noted that a “pole inventory” was completed in Woodbury. The inventory is the first step in planning the installation of fiber optic cables that will carry high-speed internet services to the underserved parts of Woodbury initially. The commissioners discussed leveraging American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to help in this endeavor.

The commissioners reviewed several documents which will prove useful in addressing the stated priorities:

- Zoning:
 - <https://www.woodburyvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Woodbury-Zoning-Ordinance-PDF.pdf>
 - <https://www.woodburyvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Zoning-Guide.pdf>
- Village Center Designation:
 - <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/designation-programs/village-centers>
 - <https://www.woodburyvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/WastewaterWorkbook.pdf>
- ARPA:
 - https://www.woodburyvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ARPA_VLCT-FinalRuleSmryAnalysis.pdf

The meeting adjourned at 7:24 P. M.