

Meeting Notes
North Bennington Planning Commission
Wednesday March 15, 2023

The meeting was held at the Depot office and was called to order at 7:00 PM by Co-Chair, Mary Rogers. Other Commission members present were Chris Damon, Bob Howe, Steve Lenox, and Matthew Patterson. Member Kim Hall was unable to attend. Callie Fishburn, BCRC Regional Planner attended and is part of the agenda. No members of the public were present.

Mr. Damon made a motion to accept the Minutes of the January 18th meeting. This was seconded by Mr. Lenox and so voted.

Ms. Fishburn previously provided an outline and questions for the annual consultation. She had hard copy available for those in attendance. Discussion ensued as to when the current Village Plan was adopted and where it might be found. It is on a vermont.gov site as well as BCRC's municipal page for North Bennington. Following this meeting the document will be posted on the Village website. The Plan was adopted in 2018. Recently the statute changed enabling the Plan to be updated every 8 years versus the previous 5-year rule. Ms. Fishburn noted municipalities may elect to edit selected section(s) or the entire document at any time, at which time the 8-year clock resets. The committee discussed the possibility that proposed changes to the zoning bylaw may require simultaneous adjustment to the Land Use section of the Plan.

Another suggestion is to an Act 174-compliant enhanced energy chapter which identifies preferred sites for renewable energy generation. Mr. Patterson reviewed the current Plan and noted the history behind it. While not required, the committee agreed with the recommendation. BCRC will assist with the section as requested.

The next Plan update is required to include an Act 171-compliant section on forest block connectivity and the template for such has been written by BCRC and is available upon request.

Ms. Fishburn reviewed the various services BCRC provides including: Transportation planning, environmental programs, energy planning, economic development, emergency management, town planning, and grant writing assistance with all the above. Mr. Patterson noted these services have been of great value to the Village and we look forward to continuing a strong relationship.

Prior to the meeting, Mr. Hall prepared comments regarding the committee's work on the bylaw review. These were given to Ms. Fishburn. It was noted that the Village's participation in the Bylaw Modernization Grant required adoption of at least one of the BCRC recommendations.

Ms. Rogers proceeded with a page-by-page review starting with Section 5 of the latest draft document. The following edits were noted:

- 5.1.4 – Swimming Pools & Ponds – it should be specified whether the requirements apply to both in ground and above ground pools, and if so, should the requirements for above ground pools be limited.

- 5.1.6 – Frontage and Access– the required approval should be from the DRB, not the Zoning Administrator.
- 5.1.7 – Paved Areas - There is concern that driveways of any sort be permitted. Mr. Damon will craft preferred language for this section.
- 5.1.9 – Inoperative Motor Vehicles, Scrap & Waste Material - Is this best addressed as an Ordinance versus as Zoning Bylaw?
- 5.1.11 – Exterior Lighting – discussion noted the issue in these matters is rendering enforcement, but it was agreed the section must be included as is.

The agenda noted that review of Section 5.1.12 would be deferred until a later meeting, thus discussion on Section 5.1 ended.

The next meeting is set for Wednesday April 19, 2023.

Mr. Damon motioned to adjourn at 8:35 PM, seconded by Mr. Howe and so voted.

Prepared by Mary Rogers

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