

Meeting Notes  
Village of North Bennington Planning Commission  
Wednesday April 17, 2024

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 co-chair Kim Hall, Chris Damon, and Steve Lenox. Members Macbeth, Ivy, and Patterson were unable to attend. No members of the public were present.

The annual review of the Rules of Procedure for the Planning Commission was done. Mr. Hall moved to adopt the Rules. This was seconded by Mr. Damon and so voted. The signed document will be given to the Clerk to become part of retained Village records.

Mr. Hall moved to accept the Minutes of the March 22, 2024 meeting. This was seconded by Mr. Damon and so voted.

Two remaining maps were revised by Samantha Page, BCRC, and given to Mr. Hall. Mr. Hall reviewed these:

- The municipal services overlay map includes the recommended shading and description updates. It does not appear that identifying potential areas for future Bennington sewer service is possible at this time.
- River Corridor and Dam Inundation map shows the five dams within North Bennington and the shaded inundation area. This map is marked as information only.

Mr. Hall noted his ongoing correspondence with BCRC and Senate chairman Christopher Bray regarding the proposed bill S311 which would allow even higher density dwelling units per acre, a rate that would likely change the landscape and character of the Village if enacted. There is little organized effort in the state to highlight the lack of data and unintended consequences of the bill as written. Mr. Hall continues his efforts to urge caution. Mr. Lenox asked if organizing a letter to the editor campaign might be fruitful.

Mr. Hall shared a letter to Shannon Pytlik, VTDEC Water Quality Division, River Management Section, regarding voluntarily adopting river corridor regulations and questions on methods to control flooding on Paran Creek. No reply has been received in a month. Ms. Rogers will attempt another contact.

There was extended discussion on matters pertaining to Village emergency planning.

- We still await a visit by the dam inspector promised to Mr. Leblanc, highway supervisor, and Mr. Hall.
- Planning Commission members in attendance expressed interest in reading the 2022 Hazard Mitigation Plan. Ms. Rogers will forward the pdf. (Shared subsequent to the meeting.) It is not presently on the website but it will be posted there. Mr. Hall will share the document with Bennington College security personnel. (Shared subsequent to the meeting.)
- The LEMP annual revision will be reviewed and approved by Trustees on April 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Mr. Hall and Mr. Lenox spoke about their efforts to begin a conceptual study on the feasibility of relocating the fire station to the Village property on Mechanic Street. A site visit was done, and concept drawings prepared. The Commission feels this study is needed since a fire station relocation is mentioned in several previous hazard assessments and the 2018 Village Plan. The Commission takes no position on the necessity or priority of such a project. Rather, if it remains

such a hazard that it continues to be included in multiple iterations of the Village Plan and the Hazard Mitigation Plan, then it would seem only prudent that a study should be undertaken. If alternatives exist for fire service to the Village, such that the location of the station can be removed as a hazard, those alternatives should be discussed with Trustees and the public.

A discussion on the list of tasks required to update the Village Plan prepared by Mr. Hall last month resumed. It was noted that the 2018 Plan will be edited for current statistics rather than rewriting significant sections of the Plan. Commission members can find some of the needed data in the 2022 Hazard Mitigation Plan and other State resources. BCRC will be asked for assistance as well.

Members also resumed discussing potentially expanding the village center area. Application for changes must be applied for by November 2024. We will investigate the nature of certain tax credits accruing to an approved Village Center. Perhaps more relevant, property in a  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile radius from a VC may bypass certain Act 250 regulations. This could be enticing to certain approved developments.

The next meeting is set for Wednesday May 22, 2024, at 4:00 PM rather than the normal time of 7PM at the Depot Office.

Motion for adjournment at 8:45 PM was made by Mr. Lenox, seconded by Mr. Hall, and so voted.

Attachments to these meeting notes include the following:  
Village Plan Update Tasks

Prepared by Mary Rogers

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