

Meeting Notes  
North Bennington Planning Commission  
Wednesday February 21, 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, Joe Macbeth, and Steve Lenox. No members of the public were present.

Mr. Damon moved to accept the Minutes of the January 17, 2024 meeting. This was seconded by Mr. Hall and so voted.

Mr. Hall reviewed the maps requested from BCRC last month.

- District map – as voted by the Commission and in the published Draft. No changes were cited.
- Shoreland overlay – no changes cited
- Flood Hazard overlay – two overlays were presented. One notes the FEMA defined areas by type of hazard. Another includes the river corridor. There are rules for river corridors that are optional for municipalities to adopt. Adoption adds a level of difficulty to oversee but can enhance FEMA grants should certain events occur. The Commission will review the regulations and then decide whether to adopt or include the overlay as information only.
- Historic overlay – as proposed by the Commission and published in the Draft. No changes cited.
- State defined Village Center overlay – VC designations can be reviewed by November 2024. BCRC can assist with identifying and justifying potential changes. After looking at the current designation and posing some suggestions, the Commission will take up the matter at a later meeting.
- The map with overlay of municipal services has not yet been completed.
- There is a dam inundation map that will be included as information only.

Recent resident Hilary Nicole Ivy submitted a letter of interest in joining the Planning Commission and her resume. She has extensive experience with numerous data information and research software and mapmaking technology. Mr. Hall motioned to recommend her appointment by the Trustees at the March Trustee meeting. This was seconded by Mr. Macbeth and voted unanimously. Her letter and resume will be forwarded to all trustees.

Mr. Hall reported on the public meetings BCRC is moderating for the Town of Bennington to gain public comments relevant to revising the Bennington Town Plan. Mr. Hall and Ms. Rogers attended one of the events. The meeting consisted of groups of five unrelated individuals with short discussions on a series of topics designed to prioritize planning needs defined by the public. Mr. Hall suggested that the Village could hold one or two similar meetings to engage our residents.

Mr. Hall and Ms. Rogers reported on an introductory meeting of the Regional Emergency Management Committee (REMC) they attended along with Scott Creedy, trustee, and Fire Chief Kieth Cross. Each municipality should appoint two members to this committee, one of whom serves as the Village Emergency Management Director (EMD). Cities and towns have a vote on committee business, villages do not. North Bennington appointees are nevertheless vital to committee discussions and decisions. The REMC identifies potential hazards impacting our communities, identifies weaknesses in local and regional hazard mitigation and preparedness plans, and seeks remediation of such. Both tabletop

exercises and hands on practices will be determined for topics the REMC identifies. Dam safety had previously been identified as a North Bennington hazard. Tabletop exercises for a Paran dam failure will be scheduled this year. We also asked the REMC to include derailment of railcars with hazardous materials added to the list of exercises and requested a railroad representative to speak at a future quarterly REMC meeting.

Mr. Hall discussed his extensive research into rules governing transportation and storage of hazardous materials on railways. He also reviewed various inspection reports of the Paran dam. Numerous deficiencies identified years ago appear unresolved as of 2022 and 2023 reports. Bridge and dam safety are part of the Village Plan and thus urgently require answers to questions posed by these reports. Mr. Hall introduced a potential addition to the Land Use and Development Regulations, and the Planning Commission will discuss it at a subsequent meeting.

Mr. Hall commended Mr. Patterson and the prior Planning Commission for their work on the 2018 Village Plan. Commission members all agreed to begin an in-depth review of this plan and identify areas to update. Public discussion meetings will follow at some point.

The next meeting is set for Wednesday March 20, 2024, at 7:00 PM at the Depot Office.

Motion for adjournment was made by Mr. Damon, seconded by Mr. Lenox, and so voted. The meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Attachments to these meeting notes include the following:

Concentrated Hazardous Explosive Material Storage in Tank or Rail Cars – Draft Section for review

Lake Paran Dam Rapid Inspection Report 07/20/2023

Lake Paran Dam Safety Inspection Report 11/23/2022

Prepared by Mary Rogers

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