

Meeting Notes
North Bennington Planning Commission
Wednesday March 20, 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. Trustee Scott Creedy also attended. No members of the public were present.

Mr. Damon moved to accept the Minutes of the February 21, 2024 meeting. This was seconded by Mr. Lenox and so voted.

Mr. Hall reported that the Trustees appointed Hilary Ivy to the Planning Commission at the March Trustee Meeting. We welcome Ms. Ivy to the group and eagerly anticipate her ideas.

The few remaining maps to finalize were discussed:

- River Corridor and Dam Inundation maps will be included for information only. Officially adopting river corridor regulations would add complexity to what a ZA and/or trustees would need to manage. Providing sources of information on the topic may be helpful to residents or those interested in building along the corridor.
- A draft of the municipal services overlay map was reviewed and some shading and description is recommended.

Mr. Hall reviewed his correspondence with BCRC regarding the proposed bill S311 which would allow even higher density at a rate that would likely change the landscape and character of the Village if enacted. There does not appear to be robust action against the proposed bill from regional management groups. Mr. Hall has attempted to educate our senators on the unintended consequences of this bill.

Mr. Hall noted that emergency planning is an integral part of the Village Plan and deficiencies have been noted for some time. It is essential that the Village have two representatives attend REMC meetings and advocate for Village needs. It is the responsibility of Trustees to make such appointments. Mr. Hall will seek a meeting with the emergency coordinator at Bennington College to see if there are areas for collaboration. Mr. Hall and Ms. Rogers are attending a zoom session hosted by the State and BCRC on preparing the annual Local Emergency Management Plan. This is at 2:00 PM Monday March 25 at the Depot. Trustees had been invited as are any member of this committee.

Norm Leblanc and Mr. Hall walked the railroad track and bridge at the Paran dam. It was clear to that no maintenance has been done in some years. Mr. Leblanc will contact the dam inspector to come do a site visit. We would like instruction on how to monitor the dam since no one appears to be doing so. Ms. Rogers will follow up with Mr. Leblanc.

Commission members present discussed the opportunity to apply for a hazard mitigation grant. A preliminary application is due March 29th but the application period extends for a couple more months. Conceptually, the Village could ask for a grant to relocate the fire station to the Mechanic Street property housing the Garage. Local funding of at least 25% would be needed requiring a long-term bond. The idea was deemed worth pursuing.

Mr. Hall presented a list of tasks, generally data collection, required to update the Village Plan. Commission members and trustees can provide some of the data. We must rely on BCRC for a significant part of the project. Mr. Hall asked the Planning Commission to thoroughly read the 2018 Plan and volunteer for some data collection.

A discussion ensued over the idea of expanding the village center area. This designation must be applied for and approved by the State. Village Center designated areas may have certain tax credits accrue. Property in a $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile radius from a VC may receive some relief from certain Act 250 regulations. A case would have to be made and applied for by November 2024.

The next meeting is set for Wednesday April 17, 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 8:50 PM.

Attachments to these meeting notes include the following:

Village Plan Update Tasks

Prepared by Mary Rogers

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