Minutes

Meeting of the Middlesex Planning Commission
Wednesday, April 17, 2024
6:00 PM
Middlesex Town Clerk's Office
5 Church Street
Middlesex, VT 05602

This meeting was conducted in-person at the Town Clerk's Office and remotely using the town's Zoom account.

Planning Commission Members
Sandy Levine
Elle O'Casey
Mitch Osiecki
Paula Otenti

Barb & Greg Whitchurch, residents
Randy & Jwan Joslin, residents

Call to Order
Chair Sandy Levine called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

Roll Call
Planning Commission members Sandy Levine, Elle O'Casey, Mitch Osiecki, and Paula Otenti were present.

Also attending were Middlesex residents Barb & Greg Whitchurch and Randy & Jwan Joslin.

All participants were present at the Town Office except Randy & Jwan Joslin, who joined the meeting remotely via Zoom.

Sandy Levine led a round of introductions, including Paula Otenti, who was recently appointed to the Planning Commission to fill a vacancy.

Adjustments to Agenda
None

Minutes

Sandy moved to approve minutes of Mar 20. Elle seconded.
Vote to approve: 3-0-1 (Paula abstained).

Discussion of Vacancy on Planning Commission

Sandy noted that the PC has a new vacancy. The Select Board will request letters of interest from residents and appoint a new member to fill the vacancy until next Town Meeting, when a member will be elected to serve the remainder of the term.

Old Business:

Neighborhood Infill Follow Up

Mitch will share a follow up email with our contact list of residents who attended the community event last October. Mitch will share resources on infill housing options and advise residents that the PC is willing to facilitate continued meetings and discussions on housing if community members are interested.

Comment from Greg Whitchurch: suggests that we define "infill housing" in follow up communication.

Comment from Barb Whitchurch: suggests we create a survey to gauge concerns of the community.

Bear Education

We have struggled to get commitments from anyone at the State to attend the Middlesex Energy Fair on April 27. We plan to have a table at that event to share information with residents about coexisting with bears.

Sandy is available to staff the table at the Energy Fair. Sandy and Paula agreed to work on a brief list of tips and information.

Paula offered to check with some contacts at the State to see if she can find someone interested in attending the Energy Fair.

Walking Trails near Rumney

Discussed the possibility of holding our May 15th PC meeting at Rumney to engage with residents in the vicinity of the school about issues around pedestrian safety.

Mitch will check with Rumney about the availability of the facility for our May meeting. We can also run an announcement in the school newsletter to remind folks of the meeting date, location, and focus.

Road Planning Discussion

Sandy commented that while maintenance of town roads is not the responsibility of the Planning Commission, we are able and willing to help coordinate discussions of issues of concern to residents.

The Select Board has set up an advisory committee to gauge concerns of residents. Sandy Levine is a member of the advisory committee. Several volunteers have stepped forward to serve on this committee. First meeting is scheduled for tomorrow, Mar 18.

Update on Galaxy of Yes (formerly known as the Colby Farm)

Russ Bennett had planned to meet with the PC for an update discussion, but he's is unavailable tonight. We'll try to reschedule him soon.

Other Business

Budget Committee

Mark Harris of the Budget Committee has sent out a request asking that town bodies anticipating significant capital expenditures (typically, projects in excess of $5,000) plan to meet with the Budget Committee to discuss. The PC does not expect to engage in any projects in the foreseeable future that will merit a review by the Budget Committee.

Grant Opportunity

We were recently advised of a new initiative, grants for redevelopment of designated Village Centers (renovation of the Town Hall is the type of project that will qualify for consideration). Eligibility: this grant is available to towns with populations less than 2.500 people. We would not be competing with larger communities for this funding. Promising for the town, but will not directly involve the PC.

WindowDressers

WindowDressers is a non-profit that helps communities organize events to build low-cost window inserts to help community members insulate drafty old homes at an affordable cost. Middlesex has been participating in build events for a couple of years now.

WindowDressers is hosting an event at Middlesex Town Hall on Monday, April 21 (6:00pm). The purpose of this event is to share information and resources with non-participating towns who might be interested is starting a WindowDressers build event in their communities. Lauri Scharf of the Middlesex Energy Committee is one of the hosts of the event on the 21st.

Elle asked about posting on Front Porch Forum to share info with the community about the work of the PC. The other members of the PC agreed that publicizing what we are doing is a worthwhile effort.

Next Meeting

Wed, May 15 (6:00pm) Hybrid format -- Zoom or in-person. The May meeting will likely be held at Rumney Memorial School.

Adjournment

Sandy moved to adjourn; Elle seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 7:01 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitch Osiecki
Planning Commission secretary emeritus