Minutes

Meeting of the Middlesex Planning Commission
Wednesday, June 19, 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 (remote)
Mitch Osiecki
Paula Otenti
Betsy Davis

Ken Davis, resident
Chris McVeigh, resident
Russ Bennet, Planetary Matters
Reuben MacMartin, CVRPC (remote)
Abe Koffman, VTrans (remote)

Call to Order
Chair Sandy Levine called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

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

Also attending were Middlesex residents Ken Davis, Chris McVeigh, and Kevin Thompson (Zoning Administrator). Other attendees were Reuben MacMartin (CVRPC), Abe Koffman (VTrans), and Russ Bennett (Planetary Matters).

All participants were present at the Town Office except Elle O'Casey, Reuben MacMartin, and Abe Koffman, who joined the meeting remotely via Zoom.

Adjustments to Agenda
None

Minutes
Betsy moved to approve minutes of May 15. Elle seconded.
Vote to approve: 5-0.

Old Business:

Walking Trails near Rumney (update)

Paula reported that a group of interested residents are currently researching speed control options. They are exploring a 3-5 year project, various components of which could be implemented as funding becomes available.

Sandy asked Reuben if the CVRPC can assist with this effort. Reuben said that might be possible. As we identify projects we're interested in pursuing, we can discuss them with Reuben. Reuben can likely point us to grant money that may help fund some of the projects.

Sandy reported that some "low-hanging fruit" ideas that are under consideration include signage, traffic speed warning signals, and public education.

Ken Davis shared a map of the current parking lot layout. The group is exploring options for altering traffic flow to spread out "events" and staging areas.

Ken reported 700+ vehicles a day travel past Rumney. For many of those vehicles, Rumney is not the destination.

Chris McVeigh reported that he has reached out to the landowners on the north side of Shady Rill Rd between Rumney and Wood Rd. He hasn't heard back from everyone yet, but is encouraged that there appears to be interest in creating a walking/biking path along this stretch.

Sandy suggested that we contact Sarah Tanner to see if she can assist us with mapping a potential path. Mitch will contact Sarah to discuss.

Mitch will bring this project to the Trails Committee. After Chris has had a chance to talk to all landowners, he will want to organize an exploratory walk in the next month or so.

Mitch mentioned that Collin O'Neil (Wrightsville) may also be able to advise us about the nuances of creating a public/private trail. Mitch will also reach out to Collin and see if he has any thoughts to share.

Chris and Ken departed the meeting.

Middlesex Village (update)

Discussion of possible demonstration projects in the village.

The idea is to mock up, with temporary materials, possible traffic-calming measures. Reuben suggested that we plan for a 3-week demonstration.

Tighten turns on/off Route 12, bump outs, traffic-calming markings along the roadway.

Measure traffic speed, implement demonstration projects, follow-up measurement of traffic speed after several weeks of demo measures.

Process:

- PC will discuss logistics.
- Meet with village residents.
- Present plan to Select Board.
- Work with VTrans to schedule demonstration projects and measure impacts.

Sandy asked whether it is realistic to implement a demo project this year. Response: possibly.

Sandy also wondered how actively VTrans will want to be kept in the loop as this project progresses.

Reuben MacMartin shared a project overview. Discussed some of the features to be installed that represent environmental signals that the area is a compact village.

The town will be responsible for the "project build." CVRPC will provide materials. Russ Bennett indicated that Camp Meade will be happy to help with installation.

PC members indicated support for moving forward. Sandy noted that we should plan to reach out to village residents soon.

Mitch noted that it would be worthwhile to reach out to AARP VT. They often participate in projects like these.

Motion: Paula moved that the PC proceed with this project. Mitch seconded.
Vote to approve: 5-0.

Timeline:

- 7/10 – potential meeting with village residents.
- 7/16 – Select Board meeting (PC to present project).
- 7/17 – July PC Meeting.

Neighborhood Infill Follow Up

Elle proposed that the PC plan to follow up with residents about infill housing. Suggested a meeting in the fall. Envisions an informational meeting, with Kevin Thompson available to answer questions, and possibly a representative from DEC (wastewater permitting).

If there's interest, can imagine a possible series of three sessions:

1. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).
2. Cheaper, more efficient heating.
3. How do I add solar?

Russ suggested posing an open-ended question to residents: What would you like to do with your property?

Kevin suggested discussing Residential Buildings Energy Standards (RBES) Certification.

Could also invite Efficiency VT to help with education outreach.

Also, discuss the housing crisis. There is not just a shortage of low-income housing; there is a shortage of housing across many economic levels.

Elle will work on an initial questionnaire.

Bear Education

Rumney has had problems with bears, but difficulties can be traced to the unwillingness of staff to implement steps such as keeping compost secure.

Road Committee

This group is making good progress. May want to think about pursuing a Municipal Planning Grant in the fall. For July meeting, research application deadline.

Other Business

Workplan

Sandy mentioned that PC members might think about other projects we might want to prioritize.

Kevin Thompson suggested a review of zoning maps. Kevin explained that it would simplify matters greatly if zoning districts followed property boundary lines.

Could look into assistance from CVRPC. Mitch will talk to Brian Voigt Committee to discuss how much work this might entail.

Next Meeting

Wed, July 10 – possible meeting with village residents.
Wed, July 17 – regular July meeting.

Adjournment

Paula moved to adjourn; Betsy seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 7:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitch Osiecki
Planning Commission secretary emeritus