Minutes

Meeting of the Middlesex Planning Commission
Wednesday, February 19, 2025
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
Mitch Osiecki
Paula Otenti
Betsy Davis

Call to Order
Chair Sandy Levine called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

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

Others in attendance: Chris Austin, resident; Dylan Broderick, resident; Dave Magida, resident; Russ Bennett, Planetary Matters; and Kevin Thompson, Zoning Administrator.

All members were present at the Town Office.

Mitch volunteered to take minutes.

Adjustments to Agenda
Added two discussion items: PUC (Emancipation Energy Solar Project) and Route 100 Transportation Corridor

Minutes
Approval of January minutes.

Motion: Betsy Davis moved to approve draft minutes of Jan 15. Paula Otenti seconded.
Vote to approve: 4-0.

Old Business:

Middlesex Village Traffic-calming Demonstration Project
Sandy provided a brief update. VTrans is interested in pursuing the demonstration project this year. Select Board has indicated their support. The PC should remember to check in with village landowners to remind them of this project.

Municipal Water System in the Middlesex Village (update)
PC received survey responses from approximately 14 residents. Of those responding, folks appear to support pursuing the project.

PC will share this feedback with the SB and see what they would like to do next.

Rumney School Road (update)
No news about potential walking trail along Shady Rill Road. Mitch will contact Chris McVeigh for an update.

Paula is working on an AARP Challenge Grant application to help fund this project. Grant will fund up to $25K – our project is currently projected to cost around $18-20K.

Motion: Betsy made a motion that the Paula pursue this grant on behalf of the PC; Mitch seconded. **Motion to approve: 4-0.**

Neighborhood In-fill Housing
Discussion of possible next steps. Mitch suggested contacting Agency of Commerce & Community Development about attending or providing promotional material about housing that we might share at the Middlesex Community Festival in May.

Budget Update
Proposed increase in our postage budget was removed – final budget proposes same postage budget as current year. Our proposed signage budget item has been moved to the Road Department.

Town Meeting
Sandy shared an informational poster we displayed at a table at last year's Town Meeting. Will update to reflect current priorities.

Municipal Planning Grant
Sandy is assisting Road Committee with this grant application. The proposal is two-pronged: Maintenance and repair of culverts (including those under homeowner's driveways), and a 5-year road maintenance plan.

Motion: Paula moved that the PC formally support the MPG application; Betsy seconded.
Motion to approve: 4-0.

New Business:

Great Brook Futures Project
Sandy briefly summarized this project. Mike Klein, Middlesex resident and retired river specialist, is assisting. There is a introduction to this project posted on the PC's Whats Next Middlesex site.

Zoning – Discussion of Industrial Park zoning
Kevin introduced this topic by explaining that he has received an application that included an accessory retail establishment to be located in the Welch Park area. The application's principal use is a commercial bakery, which is allowed in the Industrial Zoning district. But the accessory use, retail sales, is not allowed in the Industrial District.

Kevin suggested that the PC might want to have a discussion about changing the zoning designation of the Welch Park area from Industrial to Mixed Use.

A couple of arguments in favor of such a change are:

- There is little demand for industrial uses these days;
- A transition from Village Center to Mixed Use would be a less abrupt transition.

Kevin added that he did not bring this item up specifically in response to this particular application. He's had several people raise this topic in recent years.

Comment from Chris Austin: favors some flexibility in the allowed uses in the current Industrial District. He also noted that many communities have created Industrial Districts, often near Village Centers, but have seen the need and demand for those districts change over time.

Other comments supported a less abrupt transition than Village Center adjacent to Industrial.

Mitch commented that he supports reopening the conversation about compatible uses for the area adjacent to the Village. Some related topics we might consider:

- Is it possible to expand our Village?
- If so, would that be desirable?
- Might we consider establishing a Neighborhood Development Area?
- Are there other compatible uses we should consider?

Russ spoke in favor of encouraging development of more housing in the Village.

PC will plan to continue this conversation at our next meeting.

Updated Project List
Sandy has updated the project list once again.

PUC Petition for Amended Certificate of Public Good.

Emancipation Energy (the solar project on the Kingsbury property on Center Road) has petitioned the PUC for an amendment to their Certificate of Public Good. The original PUC does not allow for additional clearing of land on the property. Kingsbury has received DRB approval to construct a pair of duplexes on this property below the solar array. Some additional land-clearing will be required to allow for construction of the duplexes and for developing the wastewater system.

VT 100 Transportation Corridor

A number of people in the Mad River Valley are working on a long-term project to connect several (a dozen or so) existing biking and walking trails and paths into a more cohesive trail. Plans for this system have tentatively identified a "northern terminus" of this system that would end where Lovers Lane in Moretown meets US Route 2 near the Middlesex/Moretown town line.

Russ Bennett suggested to the folks working on this project that the Camp Meade campus might make better terminus for this trail system.

There's nothing formally proposed yet, but this could be an interesting project to discuss.

Correspondence
None.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, Mar 19 at 6:00 pm.

Adjournment

Mitch moved to adjourn; Paula seconded.
Meeting adjourned at 7:19 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitch Osiecki, Secretary Emeritus