Minutes

Meeting of the Middlesex Planning Commission
Wednesday, March 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
Tom Jackman
Dave Magida
Mitch Osiecki
Paula Otenti - absent

Other Guests:
Randy George, Red Hen
Eliza Cain, Red Hen
Keving Thompson, Zoning Administrator
Russ Bennett, Planetary Matters & Galaxy of Yes

Call to Order
Chair Sandy Levine called the meeting to order at 6:09 pm.

Roll Call
Planning Commission members present: Sandy Levine, Tom Jackman, Dave Magida, and Mitch Osiecki. Paula Otenti was absent.

Others in attendance: Randy George, Eliza Cain, Keving Thompson, Russ Bennett.

Keving Thompson attended via Zoom; all others were present at the Town Office.

Mitch volunteered to take minutes.

Adjustments to Agenda -- *none*

Minutes
Approval of February minutes.

Motion: Mitch moved to approve draft minutes of Feb 19. Sandy seconded.
Discussion: Mitch stated the Robert's Rules of Order state that members may vote to approve minutes even if they were not in attendance at the meeting in question. Tom Jackman concurred.
Vote to approve: 4-0.

Election of Officers

Chair: Dave nominated Sandy to continue as Chair; Tom seconded.
Vice-Chair: Tom nominated Paula; Sandy seconded.
Secretary: Sandy nominated Mitch; Tom seconded.
Vote to approve: 4-0.

Meeting Date/Time
By consensus, members agreed to continue practice of meeting on the third Wednesday at 6:00pm.

Review of Open Meeting Law
Sandy briefly discussed important elements of the State's Open Meeting Law and other requirements for members of Municipal Boards.

Noted also that that there is a 45-minute Ethics Training video on the CVRPC website. Members are encouraged to view this video.

Sandy will update the listing of PC members on the Town Web Site. Also discussed requirements for public notice of meetings.

Tom submitted some proposed revisions to our Planning Commission Rules of Procedure. Discussion of these revisions tabled until our April meeting, but members are encouraged to review.

Introduction of Members
PC members each introduced themselves and provided a brief background and summary of interests.

Old Business:

Review of Zoning – Industrial District west of Middlesex Village
There's been a proposal offered to annex the current Industrial District with the current Mixed Use District that encompasses the area around Exit 9.

One suggestion: require that new buildings be at least two stories. The upper stories would encourage more office space or residential housing.

Sandy reviewed the process for amending zoning regulations.

Tom expressed his support for this proposal. Mitch concurred.

Kevin suggested adjusting zoning districts by map only, with no changes to the language of the regulations at this time.

Paula, via email, had raised a question about extending the Mixed Use District to the Moretown town line. This change would impact approximately four additional properties. There does not seem to be any urgency to change the uses of the existing residential properties.

Russ commented that it is important to guard against sprawl. He cautioned that we should encourage light industrial uses rather than retail. He noted that light industrial uses create better jobs than retail uses do. Be careful about the unintended consequences of changes to zoning regulations.

Sandy noted that retail is not allowed as a principal use in the Mixed Use District. Retail uses can only be allowed as secondary uses, and can occupy no more than 50% of structures. Gas stations are specifically not allowed in this district.

Randy asked how many parcels are in the district under consideration to be added to the expanded Mixed Use District. Response: about 18 parcels.

The comment was raised that it's generally not advisable to change zoning to accommodate a specific business request. Kevin commented that he's had numerous inquiries in recent years about proposals that would not be allowed in the current Industrial District.

Motion: Mitch moved that Sandy prepare a warning for a public hearing on the proposal to expand the current Mixed Use zoning district to be held as part of the April PC meeting. Tom seconded.

Discussion: A suggestion was offered that new buildings should be required to be at least two stories. Further comment was offered that single-family dwellings, accessory structures, and accessory dwelling units (ADU's) should be exempted from this requirement.

Motion: Mitch offered a revised motion, authorizing Sandy to prepare a warning for a public hearing on the proposal to expand the current Mixed Use zoning district to be held as part of the April PC meeting.

Permitted uses in this district will include a provision that new, non-residential principal structures shall be at least two stories above finished grade. Tom seconded.
Vote to approve: 4-0.

Middlesex Village Traffic-calming Demonstration Project
VTrans is set to work with the Select Board on this project. Sandy will work with the SB to notify businesses in the Village about the scope of this project.

Rumney School Road (update)
A grant proposal has been submitted to seek funding for this project.

Neighborhood In-fill Housing
No update at this time.

Municipal Planning Grant
The Road Committee has submitted a grant proposal seeking funding for work related to town road (and culvert) maintenance.

Great Brook Futures Project
Planning is underway to map bedrock geology along Brook Rd.

Middlesex Community Festival
Mitch provided an update on plans for a Town Fair in May.

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

Sandy also commented that she would welcome discussion about the best way to share information about the work of the PC.

Correspondence
None.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 16 at 6:00 pm.

Adjournment
Mitch moved to adjourn; Tom seconded.
Meeting adjourned at 7:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitch Osiecki, Secretary