

Planning Commission *Town of Ferrisburgh, Vt.*

DRAFT Minutes for meeting of August 19, 2020, held by remote teleconferencing.

Members present: Bob Beach (chair), Gail Blasius, Anne Cohn, Kristin DeBellis, Mike Quinn, Walter Reed. **Absent:** Al Chamberlain, Arabella Holzapfel, Bessie Sessions.

Town officials present: Bonnie Barnes, zoning administrator, Jessica James, chair of the Selectboard, Clark Hinsdale, member of the Selectboard.

Visitors present: Jean Richardson.

Bob Beach opened the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

Clark Hinsdale asked for an opportunity to bring the Planning Commission up to date on talks that had been occurring between Ferrisburgh and Vergennes leadership discussing opportunities for collaboration. The talks, however, have been on hold since Vergennes' leadership is in flux. In addition, the chair of the Vergennes Planning Commission, Shannon Haggett, has expressed interest in working with the Planning Commission on areas of mutual interest, specifically the Ferrisburgh to Vergennes Route 7 and 22A corridor.

Clark Hinsdale also mentioned Ferrisburgh's current planning grant, "Visualizing Density," that may involve areas that lie along or close to the Ferrisburgh-Vergennes border. He feels there are opportunities for Vergennes and Ferrisburgh to plan together. Jessica James agreed that members of the Vergennes Planning Commission are very interested in working with the Ferrisburgh Planning Commission. Clark Hinsdale noted that Adam Lougee of Addison Regional Planning Commission favored this sort of collaboration, and Jessica James commented that grant opportunities would be facilitated.

Bob Beach suggested that it might be better to move forward after the Vergennes elections, noting that he thought this was extremely important to pursue.

Bob Beach asked if the Selectboard had any comments or suggestions concerning the revision of the zoning and subdivision regulations. Jessica James replied that the Board was awaiting the suggestions of the Planning Commission. Jean Richardson clarified that the density visualization committee was examining three different areas, one of which was the area of interest to Vergennes. Jessica James reminded the Commission that there was an upcoming deadline to apply for new municipal planning grants. Bonnie Barnes suggested that the Planning Commission might want to authorize one or two people to pursue this grant opportunity, potentially with Vergennes. Mike Quinn mentioned concern about Vergennes' management of its existing wastewater system. Clark Hinsdale noted that Vergennes intended to upgrade its current system to manage stormwater better and to reduce or eliminate groundwater leaks.

Bob Beach called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Minutes approval. Anne Cohn moved to approve the minutes of the July 15, 2020 meeting as corrected. Walter Reed seconded. All voted in favor. **Motion approved.**

Minute taker. Bob Beach asked for comments about the current candidate for minute taker, Robyn Reynolds. Bonnie Barnes read an email from Robyn, expressing her interest in the position and listing her qualifications. Bob Beach will pursue offering her the job.

Application # 20-023 draft decision; 308 Summer Point Lane, applicant Peter Davis; tax map id no. 19/20/65. Walter Reed suggested that the draft decision include a time frame for completion. After discussion, Mike Quinn moved to add a deadline to the draft decision of 90 days from the date of signing the decision. Walter Reed seconded. All voted in favor. **Motion approved.**

Continued review of draft land use regulations. Bob Beach noted that the Planning Commission had received a summary document, and comments on the draft by Brandy Saxton, who has been consulting on the land use regulation revision. Jean Richardson opined that Brandy's comments were for the most part minor. Jean Richardson noted that any density revisions will await the outcomes of the Visualizing Density grant, and that any administrative changes were appropriate in scale for Ferrisburgh. Bob Beach asked how the Planning Commission wished to proceed, and asked Jean Richardson about a suggestion she had made. Jean suggested an approach similar to that of New Haven, which posted a notice on its website and encouraged comments from the public. After a few weeks the Planning Commission could hold public information zoom meetings during which people could join and ask questions or comment. Bob Beach commented that this approach would introduce the changes to the public in advance of more structured meetings required to amend the bylaws. Paper copies should be made available as well.

Mike Quinn asked whether the paper copies would show changes and/or comments. After discussion it was felt that the draft would be posted as revised, with the current regulations available on the website for comparison. Notice will go on Front Porch Forum and the Addison Independent.

The members discussed approaches to density regulations, including Planned Unit Developments and classic zoning districts, noted the history of land use development, and reviewed the new language on PUDs in the draft land use regulations. Bob Beach said that the introduction to the document will be key, with emphasis that this is a draft, intended to elicit responses from the community. Anne Cohn suggested that the comments be public. Jean Richardson volunteered for she and Bonnie Barnes to draft that introduction and provide it to the Planning Commission for review.

Bob Beach mentioned a disconnect between new septic technology and state requirements based on the perc rate, where clay soils fare poorly.

Bob Beach asked whether it was time for public comment, or whether more discussion was needed.

Mike Quinn asked whether the draft was going to be reviewed by the town attorney. Bonnie Barnes stated that it was important to have it reviewed by the town attorney before it goes out for public comment.

Bob Beach asked Jean Richardson to review and clean up the

Jean Richardson praised Arabella Holzapfel, awarding her a gold star for her tireless work with and for the committees and subcommittees involved with the land use regulation update effort.

Bob Beach asked that the minutes reflect the hard work of Arabella Holzapfel. Gail Blasius added the names of Jean Richardson and Bonnie Barnes.

Bob Beach summed up the next steps: a redraft, a letter/statement for the public about the draft, both of which will be posted for the public, an article for the Addison Independent, and paper

copies to be available for the public. Bonnie Barnes asked whether we should offer a timeline? Bob Beach suggested that we should post this for at least a month. Gail Blasius stated that the Selectboard should get a heads-up about our intended process.

Ferrisburgh/Vergennes. Bob Beach asked whether the members wished to discuss further the topics raised by Clark Hinsdale and Jessica James earlier in the meeting, and whether anyone wanted to participate. Kristen DeBellis stated that she was interested in working on this but questioned the timing. Bob Beach suggested that the Planning Commission go forward “gently,” report back to the Selectboard that there is interest, and proceed when the time is right.

Adjournment: Walter Reed moved to adjourn the meeting; Mike Quinn seconded. All voted in favor. **Motion approved.**

— Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Barnes