

**MINUTES as amended**  
**APPROVED ON : January 17, 2024**

**TOWN OF FERRISBURGH**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES**  
**WEDNESDAY November, 15, 2023**  
**At Town Offices and on Zoom**

**Members present:** Walter Reed, Bessie Sessions, Bonnie Barnes, Jean Richardson, Anne Cohn, Arabella Holzapfel.

**Members Absent:** Bob Beach, Mike Quinn, Gail Blasius

**Minute taker:** Jean Richardson

**Town staff present:** Steven True

**Members of the Public present:** Craig Heindel; Karen Petterson; Kurt Haigis

1. Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Walter, and quorum determined.
2. Minutes of October 18, 2023 were approved on **MOTION** of Bessie, seconded by Anne. Arabella abstained as not present at last meeting. Motion carried.

**3. Updating Town Plan: Kickoff Discussion:**

The Town Plan is dated 2017-2025. It is time to start the process to update the Plan as required by Statute.

Jean and Bonnie suggested some ideas for gathering recommendations from as many interested residents as possible through focus groups and seeking input from individuals and Town committees to build community consensus.

Bonnie announced that we had just heard today that we have received the \$100,000 Transport - Oriented Development (TOD) grant which is part of the Northwest Vermont \$2.1 million federal RAISE planning Grant. This will provide useful input and assistance, so that we will not need to hire a consultant. The kick -off public presentation on this RAISE grant will take place in early spring, maybe February.

The Planning Commission discussed the process for updating of Town Plan:

- **Coordinators:** Bonnie and Jean volunteered to coordinate the process
- **Process: Gather information and ideas from community experts:** Instead of having a large formal Committee which meets regularly, and then hold the formal Public Meetings way at the end of the process, the PC discussed a model of gathering new information and visions of the future of Ferrisburgh through holding many small, more informal meetings, focus groups, meetings with one or two individuals at a time etc. Each information session would focus on one relatively small aspect of the Plan- For example: on Recreation we would go to the recreation committee; for Natural Resources meet with the Conservation Commission; For History, the Historical Society. PC and public present agree that this process should encourage broader participation.
- **Public Meetings:** As we gather information we would hold periodic Public Meetings and describe and share what we are hearing from residents and accumulate further ideas and input.
- **Gather more information from small focus groups:** Following the informal public meetings we would continue collecting more community input through smaller group input.

- **Formal Public Hearing:** 2 years from now, by the time we hold the required Formal Public Meetings, we will hopefully have involved many town residents and the Plan will reflect public consensus of where we are in 2025 and where we are headed.
- **Input from Town Committees:** Craig Heindel and Karen Petterson of the Conservation Commission agree this is a good model. They expect that the UVM students that they are working with can provide an updated forest map. They will review the Town Forest section and Natural Resource sections of the Town Plan.  
Kurt Haigis of the Town Energy Committee offered a detailed Enhanced Energy Plan that his committee has been working on. Kurt asked for more interactive maps and Town Plan in addition to the written Town Plan. His committee will work on drafting language for the Energy section. Arabella is also on this committee.  
Anne will work with the Trails Committee to get input.  
Bonnie will work with the Town Center Committee.
- **Maps:** Jean and Bonnie report that they met with Adam Lougee, and that they have requested updated maps because many maps in the present Town Plan are 2010. They have also requested larger, interactive maps for ease of access and use. Adam is following up with his staff at Regional Planning to provide these maps.
- **Public Postings:** The PC will post periodic announcements for meetings and input in Front Porch Forum and set up an item about the Town Plan Update on the Town Website.
- **Timeline:** The Coordinators will develop a realistic Timeline for meetings.

#### 4. **Lack of Shade Trees in the Atkins Subdivision:**

The recent application for Subdivision of Lot 10 on the Atkins Subdivision brought to the attention of the Planning Commission the lack of shade trees which were a condition of the original approval by the PC in 2004 and noted on the recorded Plat maps. The shade tree requirement was further recorded in a Declaration of Easements, Covenants and Restrictions in December 2007. Jean provided the PC with a written, detailed list of relevant documents for reference. PC members note that some trees were planted, and some died and were not replaced. There are no trees on Lot 11 which is owned by the Town. Anne suggested a community event next spring with the school to plant trees, and suggested contacting Joe Nelson about the Shade Tree committee work.

After discussion the **MOTION** was made by Arabella, seconded by Anne to 1) Encourage the Town to take the lead and plant the three (3) trees which appear to be needed on Lot 11, owned by the Town, and thus come into compliance with the deed; and 2) informally discuss with the Homeowners Association leadership how they would like to address the lack of trees. Motion Passed.

5. **Other Business:** None
6. **Next meeting:** December 20, 2023.
7. **Meeting adjourned at 8:29 pm on** motion of Bonnie, seconded by Jean. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jean Richardson