

Pittsford Planning Commission Meeting
March 24, 2022

Board Members Present: Mark Winslow, Rick Conway, Robb Spensely, Chuck Charbonneau, Kevin Blow, Mark Pape, Donna Wilson

Others Present: Jeff Biasuzzi

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:04PM by Mark Winslow – Chair.

2. Approval of Meeting Agenda

A motion was made by Kevin Blow and seconded by Robb Spensely to approve the agenda. **The motion passed unanimously.**

3. Approval of Minutes

. February 24, 2022– Planning Commission Meeting

A motion was made by Rick Conway and seconded by Kevin Blow to approve the minutes of February 24th. **The motion passed unanimously.**

4. Public Comments

There was no discussion held.

5. Review of information from Select Board Meeting on Vermont Nature Conservancy LaBrake Road Parcel

Mark Winslow provided a video link of the Select Board meeting regarding the Vermont Nature Conservancy LaBrake Road Parcel. Mr. Winslow stated the Select Board unanimously disapproved of the sale due to not abiding by the same rules as other current use lands with regard to logging. There were some things that did not mesh with what they were told. Mr. Winslow thought it was important for the Planning Commission to review the meeting video as the Town Plan was mentioned and it may be something that needs to be addressed in the Plan. There have been some residents that have indicated there is enough conserved lands in the Town. Chuck Charbonneau stated the Town has more than half or three times as much conserved land than adjacent towns and Pittsford has been more than generous with conserved land. Mark Pape stated they were not clear of the tax implications. Mr. Winslow noted they would pay the same as what would be taxed in the Current Use program. The acreage issue previously discussed is a wash, but they do not have to abide by the rules of current use. The Select Board had concerns because of the amount of land conserved in Pittsford and they wanted logging allowed. The Nature Conservancy is getting a housing development grant to purchase the property and Mr. Charbonneau thought one needs to log property to produce more houses. Robb Spensely stated we all subsidize with tax dollars for the current use program and the special current use program is only available to certain entities like the Nature Conservancy but not private individuals. He would like for a private person to be able to identify an endangered species to be under the program as well. Mark Winslow stated the Planning Commission does not need to take action as the Select Board has already taken their position. Rick

Conway noted concern for the people trying to sell the property, as they are taxpayers, but accepted a contract that was not a smooth sale. Mr. Winslow stated a point was brought up that the Legislature is considering Bill H606 and has been passed by the House that indicates 30% of Vermont land will be conserved by 2030 and 50% will be conserved by 2050. Mr. Winslow stated this takes away from other taxpayers. Rick Conway stated the local representatives need to know what the Planning Commission's concerns are. Mr. Winslow suggested inviting the representatives to the next meeting to discuss the legislative bills. The Board was in agreement with inviting the representatives. Chuck Charbonneau stated with this bill, they are restricting landowners in not allowing them to use their property the way they want to. Mr. Winslow also suggested inviting the public to attend to join in on the conversation. Robb Spensely stated his personal feeling is climate change is about finding a balance as he agrees with the sentiments of the Board, but he believes that a balance needs to be found. Chuck Charbonneau agreed but believes Vermont is carbon neutral, so more does not need to be done and it is not necessary to take away from the landowners in Pittsford. Mr. Winslow noted balance is important, and points are well taken. Mr. Spensely stated the Nature Conservancy is open with what they are doing. Rick Conway stated Vermonters have been good stewards of the land and Pittsford had created conserved areas many years ago. Donna Wilson thought the concept is that the State wants people to live within a village setting so that protected areas can be connected. It concerns her the money is coming from the Vermont Housing as the Legislature is pushing for that to happen. Jeff Biasuzzi asked what the total land area is reserved in Pittsford. It was noted Pittsford has about 7.5% or 25,000 acres conserved and the Nature Conservancy owns 2,100 acres. It was noted the Nature Conservancy is a business and is out to maintain business and will do what they need to do to operate their business. Mr. Winslow stated there are quite a few Nature Conservancy parcels being sold in Vermont. They are buying, preserving them, and taking a portion of the land and selling to purchase additional properties. Mr. Winslow stated having the representatives visit with the Planning Commission will be important to discuss these issues and will invite them to attend the next meeting.

6. RRPC Roads Committee Meeting

Devon Neary of the RRPC notified Mr. Winslow the meeting would be held the last Thursday of the month and will send a link for the virtual meeting. It was questioned if the meeting could be in person and Donna Wilson will clarify whether the meeting will be virtual or in-person, and if virtual will provide the information to the Planning Committee members. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss information about the Route 7/Route 3 Intersection project with the RRPC's Transportation Committee. There was a question of whether the Planning Commission was in compliance with the Open Meeting Law and it was noted that the RRPC will warn the meeting and the Planning Commission members will be attending the RRPC meeting. Donna Wilson will confirm this with the RRPC.

7. New Business

Jeff Biasuzzi provided general information from the Real Estate Commission concerning Vermont's Energy Goals and noted there are some interesting statistics the Planning

Commission may be interested in. Mark Winslow stated the Planning Commission will review the information for a possible future discussion.

8. Old Business

Donna Wilson reported the State has confirmed receipt of the documents for the historic marker and are reviewing it. They have reduced the text that was provided. Ms. Wilson will follow-up regarding when the Planning Commission will be receiving confirmation on the application.

Mark Winslow noted the Adams Road property where the solar development is to be, is under contract. The prospective buyers called the Town Manager and Select Board Chair to check on the status of the solar farm permit. Chuck Charbonneau stated the purchaser is concerned with the solar contract as he feels that there are some issues. He advised there is the possibility for battery storage. Jeff Biasuzzi stated the Town Manager has indicated the Town does not take any positions, but only provides information that is requested for the sale. They are looking to see if there is a future battery storage in the future, but it is in the current contract with the current owner. Rick Conway questioned if the conditional use requirements would be considered. Mr. Biasuzzi stated if the battery storage is within the solar project, according to 30 VSA, Section 248, it exempts the solar developer from municipal requirements.

. Schedule Date/Agenda for Next Meeting

April 28, 2022 @ 7:00PM – Planning Commission Meeting (In Person and via Zoom)

9. Adjournment

A motion was made by Chuck Charbonneau and seconded by Donna Wilson to adjourn the meeting at 8:05PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary

Approved by,

The Pittsford Planning Commission