

DRAFT
Pittsford Planning Commission Meeting
September 28, 2023

Board Members Present: Kevin Blow, Rick Conway, Chuck Charbonneau, Mike Norris, Robb Spensely

Others Present: Anne Rademacher

1. Meeting - Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:03PM by Kevin Blow – Chair.

2. Approval of Meeting Agenda

A motion was made by Rick Conway and seconded by Mark Pape to approve the agenda as amended. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Postpone Item 6b to a subsequent meeting when the Zoning Administrator is present.

3. Approval of Minutes

. August 24, 2023

A motion was made by Chuck Charbonneau and seconded by Robb Spensely to approve the August 24, 2023, Planning Commission Meeting minutes. **The motion passed unanimously.**

4. Public Comment

There was no discussion held.

5. Old Business

a) Formal Request to the Select Board to Approve Application for Town Plan Updates and Zoning Amendments

Robb Spensely stated at the last Planning Commission meeting there was discussion about possible available funding for the upcoming town plan update and he volunteered to talk with the Select Board Chair regarding funds. In speaking with Alicia Malay, there are not funds available for the Planning Commission's use. Mr. Spensely also spoke with Dave Atherton and was advised there are grants available and he is working with Mr. Atherton on this. Mr. Spensely was not sure if the grant applications have been submitted as there was correspondence sent to the Planning Commission members with the request to confirm with Mr. Biasuzzi to avoid issues with the Open Meeting laws. Rick Conway responded indicating he was on board with it as long the Select Board was in agreement. Mr. Conway spoke with Selectman Dave Mills regarding the grant that had a deadline of September 30th. Mr. Spensely suggested a motion requesting the Town Manager move forward with the grant applications. Mr. Conway noted the Planning Commission is also going to begin a review of the subdivision regulations. The Commission has until 2026 to renew the Town Plan and if it is to now include an Energy Plan, there will need to be assistance from the RRPC to do the mapping. There is zoning compliance with the new State statute and Mr. Conway suggested contacting the VLCT for clarification. It was noted that at the Select Board meeting there was indication that there is a person from the RRPC that will assist in formulating the plan. Mr. Conway noted legal assistance will be needed once the draft is created. Chuck Charbonneau noted for clarification that in the past, if a Commission member agreed with information sent in an email, the members did not have to respond. Mr. Conway noted in the past grant applications were dealt with through the Town Manager and did not come before the Planning Commission and he was under the impression the Zoning Administrator was going to discuss this with the Town Manager. Mark Pape stated his interpretation was if there was no opposition, a

comment was not to be made. Mr. Charbonneau also noted that from the last meeting, the Planning Commission was in agreement with moving forward in requesting funding.

A motion was made by Chuck Charbonneau and seconded by Rick Conway to request the Town Manager move forward with planning grants that are available for the Town Plan. **The motion passed unanimously.**

A motion was made by Chuck Charbonneau and seconded by Mike Norris to amend the original motion to add “and grants for Zoning”. **motion passed unanimously.**

Rick Conway stated the Commission needs to be aware of the upgrades for zoning and assure that the Town Plan is not in conflict with the changes. He wants to ensure this is properly done by doing the Town Plan with an Energy Plan to obtain substantial deference as the next plan revision would be eight years from this rewrite. Chuck Charbonneau stated at the Select Board meeting it was noted there would not be a decision and then there was a conversation about having the Planning Commission meet with them to discuss an energy plan. Mr. Conway advised the RRPC has an energy plan and he had been in attendance at their meetings when they reviewed solar projects and when Pittsford updated the last Town Plan, there was a decision to move forward with an Energy Guidance because the RRPC already had an approved plan. Mr. Charbonneau was unsure whether the Select Board had come to a decision of whether there will be an energy plan developed for the Town or do a stand-alone document for just solar. Mr. Conway stated there is a change to modernization zoning bylaws and the Town’s zoning has to meet certain State requirements and the Town Plan does not have things in it regarding these requirements. The changes are addressing affordable housing and indicates in areas in the Town where there is water and sewer zoning shall provide for 5 units on an acre of land and currently the Town’s zoning indicates ½ acre per dwelling in the village. Mike Norris clarified these requirements are coming down from the State and require changes in the Town zoning and suggested there may be grants for this process. Robb Spensely will discuss this subject with the Town Manager.

b) Select Board Invitation to Planning Commission to Discuss Solar Siting on 10/4/23

Mike Norris has attended some Select Board meetings and he has discussed this topic with Mark Winslow about solar sitings. Robb Spensely questioned if a town has substantial deference whether they would have more input with proposed solar projects. Mr. Norris stated if someone does a solar project, there is protocol for getting a State permit and if a municipality has concerns about the project with substantial deference that Town’s comments would have more consideration. Mr. Conway questioned whether a PUC decision is final and Mr. Norris advised a decision can be appealed if something egregious is done, but as far as environmental court, there is no avenue for appeal. Mr. Norris stated this would give the Town a preliminary look at a proposed project. Mr. Norris was pleased that the Select Board invited the Commission to meet with them to discuss this subject. Mr. Charbonneau advised the Select Board wants assurance that the Planning Commission is working on an energy plan or solar siting plan. Mr. Norris asked if the Planning Commission had received any direction from the Select Board relative to the solar siting document that had been submitted to them, but it was noted there had been no response to date. Mr. Conway confirmed with Mr. Winslow at the last Planning Commission meeting that the Select Board was going to contact the Commission regarding this issue.

Anne Rademacher thought that Mark Winslow and Alicia Malay had come up with language for solar but wants to discuss this topic with the Planning Commission to assure all are on the same page. Mr. Charbonneau noted the RRPC representative provided the Town Manager information and it was noted that a solar document would not be sufficient and would require a full energy plan.

Rick Conway stated the Town is two years out regarding the readoption of the Town Plan, The Town Plan and Zoning will need to be done in accordance to State regulations and there are legal questions that need to be answered. Mike Norris suggested there may be seminars that Commission members should attend relative to the mandated changes to determine what needs to be done. Mr. Conway suggested having a member of the RRPC meet with the Planning Commission to discuss the changes in the new legislation. It was suggested to request Donna Wilson speak with an RRPC representative to assist the Commission with the zoning changes. Mr. Conway noted in the past there was no charge from RRPC and any plan that is developed also has to be approved by RRPC. It was suggested other municipalities have hired a planner to work on their town plans and it was agreed it would be beneficial to have an

outside planner assist with the Town Plan update. It was the consensus of the Commission to begin discussing this topic with the RRPC.

A motion was made by Robb Spensely and seconded by Rick Conway to invite a representative from the RRPC to a subsequent Planning Commission meeting to begin discussions about updating the Town Plan. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Robb Spensely will ask Donna Wilson to invite a member of the RRPC to attend the next Planning Commission meeting.

6. New Business

a) Registration for Vermont Municipal Day in Montpelier on 10/20/23

This item was noted for the Planning Commission members information if interested in attending.

b) Discuss Offering Public Participation through Phone Conference Call System. Discuss Zoom Training for Planning Commission Member(s)

This item was postponed to a subsequent meeting.

7. Next Meeting

October 26, 2023, 7:00PM at the Pittsford Town Office

9. Adjournment

A motion was made by Chuck Charbonneau and seconded by Mike Norris to adjourn the meeting at 8:10PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary

Approved by,

The Pittsford Planning Commission