

DRAFT
Pittsford Planning Commission Meeting
March 28, 2024

Board Members Present: Kevin Blow, Rick Conway, Derek Blow, Donna Wilson, Mark Pape

Board Members Present via Zoom: Mike Norris

Others Present: Jeff Biasuzzi

1. Meeting - Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:11PM by Derek Blow – Chair.

2. Approval of Meeting Agenda

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

3. Approval of Minutes

. January 25, 2024

A motion was made by Mark Pape and seconded by Kevin Blow to approve the January 25, 2024, Planning Commission meeting minutes. **The motion passed unanimously.**

4. Public Comment

There was no discussion held.

5. Old Business

a) Update from RRPC

Donna Wilson, liaison with the RRPC, reported the new Municipal Planning grant (MPG) will be due July 2024. She will create verbiage and hopes to have a better chance of obtaining the grant this time. During the last MPG round, \$675,000 was awarded to successful applicants. Pittsford was awarded the By-law grant. Jeff Biasuzzi advised there are private grant-writing courses available that are both on-line and in-person and Board members can obtain approval for taking courses and the municipality will fund the cost. It was noted that the RAMP program is a mapping program that provides information on items like points of interest and historical locations in the town. The grant would also include assistance with maps. Derek Blow suggested discussing the RAMP program with the Town Manager. Mr. Biasuzzi stated Nic Stark, the RRPC Planner, could provide information to the Board. Ms. Wilson reported the Brandon Town Plan was approved by the RRPC. Derek Blow noted this would be a great opportunity for the Town to obtain additional help and funding.

b. Updates on Commission Questions about Grants

Derek Blow provided an outline of questions that he had posed to the Town Manager. 1. What was the amount awarded from Act 47? The Town received \$9,774.00 with a \$1,000 match. 2. How soon can the Town apply for the municipal planning grant? The grant could be applied for as soon as it is announced. Donna Wilson noted this would be the grant that has a July 2024 deadline. 3. Are there other grants that could be used for the revisions? Mr. Atherton was not aware of any others available at this time. 4. With concern that the Planning Commission may need more funds than the grants provide to complete the revisions, is there a budget for these actions? Mr. Atherton advised the Town will cover any associated costs for updating the Town Plan. Derek Blow stated, in speaking to Mr. Atherton, it appears the Planning

Commission will receive assistance with the revisions and he did not believe that the Planning Commission's budget would be used up. Jeff Biasuzzi advised a standard maximum used to be \$8,500 for grants that would be more than adequate to cover the cost of updates and the \$9,000 for the municipal regulations upgrade should cover the cost. Derek's concern was where the funding would come from in creating a legally approved document. Donna Wilson stated the RRPC will assist with this process. 5. For billing of services from the RRPC, would the Select Board deal with the RRPC directly on these items, or does the Planning Commission have to bring RRPC's proposed expenses to the Select Board? Mr. Atherton advised the RRPC will send all invoices directly to the Town Manager.

Donna Wilson stated Logan Solomon provided suggestions from a review of the Town Plan and has asked the Planning Commission to develop their goals. Jeff Biasuzzi advised Mr. Solomon will be working on both the Town Plan and the zoning. Rick Conway noted the Town has received the MERP grant for zoning but did not receive the grant for the Town Plan. He stated the zoning is implemented from the Town Plan and is why the grant for the Town Plan was applied for. Derek Blow stated the reason for his questions to the Town Manager was the Planning Commission's concern that more funds than what was received in grants would be needed to complete all the revisions and he received confirmation from Mr. Atherton that the Town will cover the associated cost for updating the Town Plan. Mike Norris stated next year's zoning budget is higher than what was budgeted for 2023 and the budget for 2025 is reduced back down, which suggests it was increased for the amendments. Mr. Biasuzzi stated regarding legal review of a draft document, West Rutland did an update and hired VLCT to do a legal review of their plan at a cost of \$3,200. The attorneys produced recommendations that the Planning Commission implemented. Mark Pape asked if the Town Plan and zoning should be done in tandem. Mr. Norris advised Mr. Solomon had indicated the Town Plan could be taken as is, aside from the fact the Select Board has elected to pursue an Enhanced Energy plan. Mr. Conway stated there is the MERP grant for the Enhanced Energy plan and a grant was also received for the zoning updates. It was suggested to invite Logan Solomon to the next meeting to discuss the process. Mr. Norris stated Mr. Solomon has reviewed the Town Plan and had indicated that the Town did not have to make any changes as it is written so the Planning Commission would not be required to rewrite the entire Plan. What is mandatory is to include an Enhanced Energy plan in the Town Plan. Mr. Biasuzzi advised the biggest changes to the Town Plan would be the demographics and any work the Town has done to enhance flood resiliency and improvements to the infrastructure. He noted that Mr. Solomon will be making the changes to the Plan during the meetings with the Planning Commission once the goals are established. Derek Blow advised Mr. Solomon had provided the items to focus on from a preliminary review that he did. Mr. Conway stated it is important to assure the Plan complies with State regulations, noting concern with some of the mandates, but as long as the Plan is what the townspeople want, he is in favor of it.

c. Enhanced Energy Plan

Derek Blow reported Dave Atherton advised the Select Board's focus is getting the Enhanced Energy Plan incorporated. Jeff Biasuzzi suggested reviewing Brandon's Enhanced Energy Plan. Donna Wilson thought people were upset with all the solar and that is why this subject was brought forward to the Town. Mr. Biasuzzi stated the Enhanced Energy plan is something that can be done separately and incorporated in the Town Plan. Rick Conway suggested meeting with Logan Solomon to move forward on this item. Ms. Wilson will be in contact with Mr. Solomon about attending the next Planning Commission meeting and suggested placing it as an agenda item for the next meeting.

d. Next Steps for the Planning Commission

Derek Blow confirmed the Commission will be in contact with Logan Solomon to begin action on the Town Plan and development of an Enhance Energy plan.

e. Review of Goals Page in Town Plan

Jeff Biasuzzi advised that the goals are personal to each municipality and is where the plans become individualized. Donna Wilson proposed one goal to be preserving natural and scenic areas. Rick Conway noted under the Town Plan's vision under the goals and objectives, it indicates the concept is to preserve the historical character of Pittsford by encouraging residential and commercial growth within the existing village center while promoting continued uses of surrounding lands for agriculture, forestry, recreation, and other permitted uses designated within Pittsford's zoning regulations. Mr. Conway suggested on Page 9 of the Plan that Pittsford Mills needs to be incorporated the same way as the

other areas and there is a lot of information about that area. Donna Wilson stated with regard to the historic marker that has been requested, the State has indicated there is a backlog with the creation of the marker. Mr. Conway stated the Commission would want to expand the historic components of the Town and list the historic resources that we are trying to protect, and the narrative could reinforce this goal. Mr. Biasuzzi noted concern with how housing is going to be increased if the language remains that the Plan is to preserve farm and open land that has been done for decades outside the central district. Mr. Conway stated there had previously been discussion of expanding the village district and traditionally most towns expand south. Mr. Conway also noted lots that have town sewer and water can have increased residential use on a small amount of land. Mr. Conway noted concern with houses that are in disarray and what will happen with these houses and suggested some of the properties have land that has a lot of usable potential.

Mike Norris stated the Town of Burlington passed that any building lot zoned for one household can now have up to four households and will change the landscape dramatically. It is conditional to municipal water and septic and is the biggest change to their plan in 15 years. Rick Conway noted that most houses will be built up, but that would not be suitable for the character of Pittsford. Mr. Norris noted the State is outlining most of the goals, and the Commission should determine what goals are also needed outside of what the State is requiring. The Plan would include trying to preserve the character of the Town while doing what is required by the State and Mr. Norris suggested there likely needs to be a copy of the mandates prior to producing the Planning Commission's goals. Mr. Biasuzzi stated one objective that Mr. Solomon may discuss is that the Town Plan is not just statistics and information, it is a catalog of the Town that is readable and appeals to someone considering living or relocating their business to the Town. Mr. Biasuzzi stated there are people interested in hospitality-based businesses in Vermont and Pittsford would be a good location.

Donna Wilson suggested a goal for economics should be to provide a diverse economy to provide job opportunities. Rick Conway stated that currently the Town is a one-acre town, but if going with subdivision regulations it would change to a 10-acre town without Act 250. Mike Norris stated there are different permits under Act 250 for building or changes to an existing structure, and changing the operation of a business is a different permit. Generally, the operations permit is a lot easier but the land development portion of Act 250 is hugely cumbersome. Mr. Conway stated if Pittsford remains attractive in appearance, it is a very attractive area for people working from home. Mike Norris suggested an economic development director could also be very helpful noting Brandon has an economic development director and there has been an uptick in small businesses there. Mr. Biasuzzi noted Pittsford is a relatively affordable township in terms of home ownership in Rutland County. Derek Blow also advised Brandon has a low-interest loan program for small businesses and suggested a program like this could potentially spur more business. Mr. Biasuzzi suggested tax stabilization could also be done and suggested a program for low-interest loans that are subsidized by the Town for Main Street housing paint jobs could enhance the appearance of the area. Mr. Conway stated it needs to be determined how to encourage economic development for businesses like professional offices for doctors and dentists. It was noted that Pittsford also needs more restaurants. Mr. Conway stated there are places in Town that would offer good spaces to attract professional offices and suggested obtaining input from the community on what they would like to see with regard to economic development. Mr. Biasuzzi noted warehousing is a national shortage and this type of business does not require sewer or water and if the Town were to become a 10-acre town, most warehouses would fit on a five-acre parcel. Mr. Conway also noted the Town has a good tax base and good business with Omya and suggested having a conversation with Omya to determine if they have any recommendations for businesses that would be associated with them. Mr. Biasuzzi noted if a town provides housing stock, the services will follow, and there will be a need for businesses to come. Mark Pape noted there are many things that can be done to attract more people as many people work from home now. He noted that bringing in something like a micro-brewery would also be a draw. Derek Blow stated the goals are not standalones and work hand in hand with each other. Derek Blow advised he was in contact with a program called "Resource Vermont" and has applied to take their winterization course. He suggested the Town may be able to partner with them and could be a resource added to the Plan. Donna Wilson also noted as a resource that Pittsford Village Farm will have childcare for infants to 3-year-olds and will accommodate 26 children.

6. New Business

There was no new business discussed.

7. Next Meeting

April 18, 2024 @ 7:00PM at the Pittsford Town Office

9. Adjournment

A motion was made by Mark Pape and seconded by Kevin Blow to adjourn the meeting at 9:18PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary

Approved by,

The Pittsford Planning Commission

Join Zoom Meeting
Meeting ID: 652 103 6395