

DRAFT
Pittsford Planning Commission Meeting
April 18, 2024

Board Members Present: Rick Conway, Kevin Blow, Mike Norris

Board Members Present via Zoom: Robb Spensely, Donna Wilson

Others Present: Jeff Biasuzzi, Logan Solomon

1. Meeting - Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM by Kevin Blow – Vice-Chair.

2. Approval of Meeting Agenda

A motion was made by Rick Conway and seconded by Mike Norris to approve the agenda. **The motion passed unanimously.**

3. Approval of Minutes

. March 28, 2024

A motion was made by Mike Norris and seconded by Rick Conway to approve the March 28, 2024, Planning Commission meeting minutes. **The motion passed unanimously.**

4. Public Comment

There was no public in attendance.

5. Old Business

Kevin Blow reported that Derek Blow has resigned from the Commission and read the following:

“Dear Select Board,

I am writing to formally resign from my position on the Pittsford’s Planning Commission as of today, April 17, 2024. My term is coming to an end, and I believe it is the right time for me to step down from this roll.

I have truly valued my time servicing on the Planning Commission and working alongside dedicated individuals like yourself. However, due to increasing professional and personal commitments, I find myself unable to continue contributing effectively to the commission.

I want to express my gratitude for the opportunity to be a part of the commission and to contribute to the development and growth of our community. I have learned a great deal during my tenure and will always cherish the relationships I have built.

I want to thank you and the entire Pittsford’s Planning Commission for your support, collaboration, and camaraderie throughout my term. I wish the commission continued success in its endeavors to serve the town of Pittsford.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to serve on the Planning Commission. I look forward to staying connected with the commission and the community in the future.

‘
Derek Blow”

The Commission members concurred that during the time Mr. Blow was the Chair, he did a great job and thanked him for his participation.

6. New Business

. Discussion with RRPC Representative on Town Plan, Grants, Zoning By-Laws and Next Steps

Logan Solomon of the RRPC provided information for the Committee’s reference relating to the update of the zoning and town plan concerning next steps. Mr. Solomon noted Pittsford acquired a grant that requires the zoning amendments be completed by the end of 2025. There is also a timeline to have the new town plan adopted by February 2, 2026, as the current town plan would expire on February 22, 2026. If the new town plan is not approved prior to the expiration of the current one, the town cannot apply for any grants and the ideal goal is to have a new town plan by February 2, 2026. There is a public hearing process that is required for approval and time needs to be budgeted for these hearings. Based on the previous dates for the town plan and zoning updates, there is 1 ¾ years to have the zoning and the town plan adopted and in effect. In factoring in the public hearing process, if additional changes are required, there may need to be an additional hearing scheduled. The hearing requirements are for the Planning Commission to hold one hearing and the Select Board is required to hold two hearings. Mr. Solomon noted the RRPC will be available to help with these processes and suggested starting the process as soon as possible. Rick Conway stated the Commission has also been looking at subdivision regulations and asked where that would fit in the plan. Ms. Solomon stated some towns have subdivisions as a separate document and some within the zoning. Adding subdivisions could be an article in the zoning or as an attachment. The funds for the grant awarded is for expanding housing and promoting a walkable town. Depending on the subdivision ordinance, it would likely fit within the grant scope, and he will confirm if this is the case, and suggested doing this at the same time. Mr. Solomon advised that with adding it to the current document, it would be one review process.

Mr. Solomon provided additional information that talks about flood maps and flood bylaws. He stated this is important as there are going to be some changes and FEMA is going through a new methodology for flood insurance maps. It is expected that Rutland County will have new maps with bigger data sets. There was a modernization that happened in 2008 and FEMA is in the process of updating the maps. It will likely be years away for them to be in effect, but the RRPC wants to have this on the towns’ radars. The RRPC is waiting for FEMA to put together watershed draft maps and Pittsford is in two watersheds that will require having a meeting per watershed. The Town will be invited to the meetings to review and provide comments on the maps. Mr. Solomon stated FEMA is using bigger data sets from satellites and have a completely different methodology. This is a more formal process and will have an appeal process. The river corridors are state drawn and he has not heard of any changes. He also has not heard of any changes to the floodway. FEMA will also create county level maps once the original maps are agreed upon after the appeals period. Mike Norris stated the impact of these changes is far-reaching as after Irene people had received notification from banks indicating flood insurance was required and this could impact people who own land in possibly having no-build zones and buffers. Mr. Norris noted this could significantly change the Town. Mr. Solomon stated FEMA is looking at flood events and the current maps are showing fluvial flooding. The new maps will rely on sensors and field studies, and in addition to the fluvial flooding it will also show pluvial flooding. There are some uncertainties about how the maps will change the regulations. Because it is a different model, there are more data points and they can get a more granular level. It was questioned where the watersheds were located in the Town and Mr. Solomon advised he will send the Commission photos. Jeff Biasuzzi stated the maps will be much more reliable and with river corridors, they can predict where the rivers will change. Mr. Solomon stated the requirement of the town will be for the towns’ bylaws to meet the most up to date standards and FEMA will have to ensure that this is done by the time the maps are in effect. The 2027 date is from the State not from FEMA but is a best guess for the towns to plan accordingly. There is a different grant and State Agency to help towns maintain the eligibility for flood insurance. Mr. Solomon advised he can review the current bylaws to provide what needs to be changed and what is to be included into the larger zoning update. Mr. Solomon also noted the State has model flood bylaws that the Town could adopt and suggested considering both options because the State’s bylaws are FEMA preapproved and the Town would know that their plan would pass. There are river corridor bylaws and these are no adverse impact standards and is above FEMA’s requirements. Mr. Solomon could provide the State versus Federal standards and suggested the Commission determine which way makes sense for Pittsford. Once the Commission reviews this information, Mr. Solomon suggested notifying him to assure that it fits together as one amendment. The

Town should be contacted when the work on the FEMA maps happen. Donna Wilson asked what Brandon used with their recent update of their town plan. Mr. Biasuzzi advised they went with the State model for river corridors as there is incentive for towns with E-raff rating. The State and FEMA will fund more if a town has more of their detailed flood regulations approved with an increase from 12% to 17% that can equate to thousands of dollars in a flood event.

Mr. Solomon also provided information on what is required for a town plan and the State planning goals, noting a municipal plan should further State planning goals. The Commission can determine what fits Pittsford, and modify them slightly, or just consider them, but the town needs to consider the State goals and it is required to be shown in the plan. Mr. Solomon suggested contacting Jeremy Gildrien regarding information about an enhanced energy plan. Mr. Solomon noted there is no incentive to use the State's goals, but there is value if you are applying for future grants to have the State's goals included to indicate that the Town is in agreement. Robb Spensely stated with regard to Pittsford's goals, he suggested focusing on the historical covered bridges and the world class fisheries and will provide wording for the Commission's consideration. Mr. Solomon suggested scheduling a meeting with Mr. Gildrien to discuss the enhanced energy plan and start reviewing the town plan chapter by chapter to see what is still in existence or has changed. Mr. Solomon advised there is a document, Enabling Better Places, which planning commissions are required to review relating to the zoning grant. The document groups topics of reform and within each topic, they provided fixes for discussion. This is the State's recommendation for increasing walkability and increased housing. Mr. Solomon also recommended having discussions with the zoning administrator or others who are interested with zoning to discuss the current permit application process to determine if there are any issues. The Commission will need to decide which of the bylaw options they want to pursue and advise Mr. Solomon. The Commission will also need to participate in the FEMA map meetings. Mr. Solomon advised he will help with the State and Federal data points, create data maps, and provide recommendations on how to achieve goals and help with the zoning process. Jeremy Gildrien will assist with the enhanced energy plan. Mr. Solomon will be looking at each section and providing recommendations to the Commission. Mr. Solomon suggested the Commission choose a specific chapter to discuss at each meeting. Mr. Solomon noted that he had provided the Commission with a document with recommendations from the 2018 plan and he can review the town plan once the changes have been incorporated. Donna Wilson stated with regarding the municipal planning grant, there is another available grant with a June deadline and noted when speaking to the Town Manager, she was advised that he thought the Town had enough funds with the bylaw grant. Ms. Wilson asked if the town should apply with the upcoming changes to the flood insurance maps. Mr. Solomon stated the bylaw grant is for the zoning updates and the Town can use the money for just the housing chapter of the town plan. Rick Conway stated the Commission has been asked to do an enhanced energy plan and questioned how that will be done without funding. Mr. Solomon advised he will speak with Jeremy Gildrien, but his understanding is that there was a MERP mini-grant for the enhanced energy plan. Mr. Solomon summarized he will send a digital version of the information provided to the Commission and will ask Mr. Gildrien to reach out to the Commission. Mr. Conway requested Mr. Gildrien also send the Commission information prior to a meeting. Mr. Spensely also suggested someone be in contact with the Town Manager regarding the MERP mini-grant. Mr. Solomon will also provide information on subdivisions and photos of the watersheds.

Rick Conway stated when reading the Executive Director report from the RRPC, it noted that the RRPC had signed a new climate energy contract for MERP energy plans for Middletown Springs and Pittsford. Robb Spensely volunteered to email Dave Atherton about the deadline for the MERP mini-grant. Donna Wilson advised she will confirm the information that Mr. Conway had read and also noted that there was contradictory information about the Municipal Planning grant between what Mr. Solomon and Mr. Atherton had indicated. It was noted that all available grants should be applied for. Mr. Conway advised there has been a lot of back-and-forth discussion about the enhanced energy plan and the Select Board has given direction to the Commission to develop one.

7. Next Meeting

May 23, 2024 @ 7:00PM at the Pittsford Town Office

9. Adjournment

A motion was made by Rick Conway and seconded by Mike Norris to adjourn the meeting at 8:07PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

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Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary

Approved by,

The Pittsford Planning Commission