

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION – ST JOHNSBURY VERMONT
Regular meeting
May 21, 2013 7:00 pm
1187 Main Street – Fire and Safety Building Board Room

Commission members present: Susan Cherry, Maurine Hennings, William Nickerson, Ben Copans, Jim Brown

Commission members absent: Bob South

Chair Susan Cherry convened the meeting at 7:03 PM

1. *Motion to approve the minutes from April 16th 2013 meeting* was made by Mr. Nickerson and seconded by Mr. Brown. Motion carried 5-0.

2. Status of GMP pier project: Mr. Nickerson provided an update on the appointment of a subcommittee to work with GMP to develop a proposal for a pier for Fred Mold Park as GMP is required to provide for public access through federal permits. The Committee will be meeting Thursday May 30th to discuss the project.

3. Projects

- Brownfields – Gail Aloisio provided an update on the Brownfields grant including plans for a stakeholder meeting to discuss the Vermont Salvage, True Temper and former Fairbanks Morse Foundry properties. There was a discussion of the proper order for holding the stakeholder meeting and completing the brownfields assessments and Ms. Aloisio explained that the two go together as the planned reuse of the property can influence the specific brownfields assessment needed at a given site. A recommendation was made to add a goal for the stakeholder meeting to discuss conceptual ideas for the sites as well as next steps required to support project development. Mr. Brown and Ms Hennings will represent the planning commission at the meeting to be scheduled for June 25th if stakeholders can make that date.

Ms. Aloisio also gave an update on the next grant round for brownfields assessment funding which will be due in October sometime with a grant application and guidelines released by EPA sometime in August. NVDA will be putting in a grant and can assist the St Johnsbury Planning commission with putting together a grant but the Planning Commission would have to write the grant. There will be a grant workshop put on by EPA in July which Ms. Hennings and Ms. Cherry will attend.

Brownfields assessment updates:

- St J armory building – funding to complete PCB assessment will be split between town and the St Johnsbury history and heritage center and they will be choosing a contractor soon. Ms. Aloisio provided handouts regarding PCB's and VT DEC will be taking a more active role in this project do to their better understanding of PCB contamination.

- KNTT – Phase 2 assessment shows that the building contains lots of Asbestos and that there is a monitoring well that showed some contamination but the location of the well suggests an offsite source. There was some discussion of identifying potential off site sources of contamination but from the local property perspective the contamination dose not significantly complicate site reuse – which at this point is intended for parking for three rivers path. Next step for the town pending final phase 2 assessment will be seeking funds for building demolition and moving forward with site reuse.
 - Former Vermont Salvage Cooperation – Phase 1 has been completed and some initial sampling has been done to help prioritize sampling needed as part of the Phase 2 assessment. Cost for phase 2 assessment will be ready after the next regular meeting on June 18th so special meeting to approve cost proposal will likely be need after the June 18th meeting.
 - Fairbanks Morse foundry – Phase 1 draft under final review.
4. Zoning Bylaws – Copy of Bylaw revisions and report of what was changed has been sent to surrounding towns, State of Vermont, and NVDA on CD as well as posted to the web and the public hearing to review the draft bylaw changes is scheduled for June 4. There was discussions of flood hazard overlay as it was incorrectly displayed on earlier maps and it was explained that the flood hazard zones have been removed from the zoning map but a new map will be created that accurately reflects the flood hazard areas in town overlaid on the parcel map.
5. Ordinances – Ms. Cherry gave an overview of the efforts to update town ordinances which will be sent to planning commission members so these can be reviewed and addressed at an upcoming meeting. There was some discussion of the need for detailed ordinances and the extent to which state or other laws might apply and general balance between more or less regulation at the local level. Ordinance revisions have been requested by city departments including police and fire department to address ongoing issues. The ordinances identified for revision include:
- Rental house and Health code
 - Animals- not Wolf/Dog Hybrid (particularly space requirements)
 - Public health and Safety
 - Vacant Buildings
 - Solid Waste
 - Outside storage of Junk Vehicles
 - Open burning recommendations

The following ordinances were also discussed as needing to be developed or updated:

- Smoking near municipal buildings
- Busking
- Public urination

A motion was made by Ms. Hennings and seconded by Mr. Nickerson *to schedule interim working secessions to review and update ordinances*. Motion carried 5-0. Meetings were set for June 11th, July 9th and August 13th not to exceed 2 hours.

6. Trainings- there is a May 22nd VLCT training on local planning and zoning that will be attended by Ms. Cherry and Ms. Hennings.
7. Zoning Administrator report was provided by Ms. Hennings. Ms. Hennings has been tracking the status of all zoning applications which total about 30 to date and posting this to the website. She is learning that it is important to track all permit applications including those that are denied as these can be appealed. Zoning permits are supposed to be visited at an initial site visit as well as when the project is completed for a certificate of completion as permitted. Ms. Hennings is working with the town assessor to determine if the assessor can complete this task as the assessor needs to review completed projects to make adjustments to the property assessment. There are also projects with required bonding and this has to be followed up on. Ms Hennings is working more than 15 hours per week completing the minimum zoning administrator tasks. Ms Hennings and Mr. Nickerson will meet to begin pulling together a job description for zoning administrator and budget required to fill such a position.
8. Mr. Nickerson provided an update on Map overlays to be purchased through Cartographic Associate Inc. A rough quote was given of \$285 for producing and printing maps of the historic district and flood hazard areas. A recommendation was made to print maps once the zoning has been finalized and get maps laminated. Ms. Hennings made a motion and Mr. Copans seconded *to allow Mr. Nickerson to pay up to \$500 to Cartographic Associate inc. for maps of the new zoning districts, flood hazard areas and historic district*. Motion was carried 5-0.
9. There was a discussion of a Municipal Planning Grant to develop a master plan for the downtown area and the need to get moving on the tasks to meet the grant timeline. There was a discussion of the difference between the broader recently adopted town plan and more specific master plan that will lay out a more defined development plan and related municipal capital budgeting to support this for the downtown section of St Johnsbury as well as other identified corridors. The immediate tasks for the project are to hire a consultant needed to support the master planning effort. Ms. Hennings made a motion *to form a subcommittee to set up an action plan to move the MPG grant forward* which was seconded by Mr. Nickerson. The motion carried 4-0. The subcommittee will be Ms Cherry and Ms. Hennings.
10. Mr. Brown made a *motion to adjourn* and Mr. Nickerson seconded. Motion carried 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 9:33.

Respectfully submitted,
Ben Copans
Secretary, St Johnsbury Planning Commission