



Town of Mount Holly Planning Commission

Town Office & Remote Electronic – Special Work Meeting Minutes

Wednesday July 6, 2022

7:00 P.M.

Commission Members Present: Jon McCann (Chair), Jim Seward (Vice Chair), Brigid Sullivan, Andrew Seward, Andrew Schulz,

Also Present: Renee Sarmiento (Clerk), Stephen Michel

1. Chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.
2. Changes to the agenda
 - a. Added Building Construction Registration Forms Update by Administrative Officer
 - b. Added Email Correspondence
3. Building Construction Registration Forms Update by Administrative Officer
 - a. Administrative Officer asked the Planning Commission members questions about missing information on three BCR forms.
 - i. The Chair added an X to mark the location on the map for one BCR.
 - ii. Recommendation was made for AO to follow up with applicants for missing information on the other two BCR forms.
 - iii. Commissioner Schulz suggested making a note on the form that information was added based on conversations with the applicant.
4. Email Correspondence
 - a. The Chair read an Email from Matt Burke @mbmcllc.com. Email stated Mr. Burke works for Verizon Wireless and is looking to improve cell coverage in Mount Holly. Exploring the co-location on a cell tower on 581 Steward Road South. What time of permitting is required at a local level? Chair read the email aloud to the Planning Commission members.
 - i. Response: Planning Commission unanimously agreed a BCR should be filed with the Administrative Officer.
5. Town Plan Revisions
 - a. Flood Resilience Plan
 - i. Existing Town Plan does not have a substantial amount about flood resilience.
 - ii. How do we make our town more resilient to flooding and more resilient in our response to disaster? The costs to prevent are lower than the costs to recover.
 - iii. Chair gave some background on the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan: It used to be any type of disaster including terrorism, for example. It is now only for natural disasters (flooding, fire, storms). There was a group that worked on this back in 2020 and finished early 2021. Some towns refer to it in the Town Plan or copy/past relevant parts. Chair suggested referencing it in the Mount Holly Town Plan. Unanimously agreed to reference the current LHMP from the Town Plan Flood Resilience plan.
 - iv. Commission Sullivan referenced the current Town Plan's Flood Resilience section and read the two goals and policies aloud. Commissioner Sullivan commented that the current plan did not reference the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and that it should. The Chair explained there were two parts that

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are now two different plans: Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Local Emergency Management Plan which is more operational.

- v. Chair reviewed reimbursement for natural disasters. FEMA typically covers 75% and requires a 25% match. The State's Emergency Relief & Assistance Fund (ERAF) will contribute either 7.5%, 12.5%, or 17.5% toward that match if certain conditions are met.
- vi. 12.5% ERAF rate if we have: 1) Road and Bridge Standards 2) Local Emergency Management Plan 3) National Flood Insurance Program 4) Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
- vii. 17.5% ERAF rate if we also have River Corridor Protection.
- viii. Up until June, for perhaps a few months, Mount Holly was at the 7.5% rate of reimbursement due to the Local Emergency Management Plan had expired. The Chair received a message from Jeff Chase (EMD) that the plan has been updated and accepted and Mount Holly is back up to a 12.5% reimbursement rate.
- ix. Chair passed around sheets with FAQ's of river corridors to Planning Commission members. Chair explained that river corridor protections are usually implemented as an amendment to Flood Hazard Area Regulations in towns like ours.
- x. The Local Hazard Mitigation Plan adopted by the Select Board has as a goal to "Manage Development in Erosion Hazard Areas by Adopting River Corridor Bylaws" by December 2021.
- xi. Flood hazard areas are about inundation risks – generally slower moving waters, water levels rising, hydrostatic pressure. River corridor protections are for fluvial erosion. which is mentioned in the current Town Plan. They are assigned different regulations to cover broader types of flooding.
- xii. Unanimously agreed to reference the Flood Hazard Area Regulations in the Town Plan.
- xiii. Chair stated there are also a few Vermont statutes on stormwater. A stormwater mapping and plan has been done for the village.
- xiv. Discussion about the requirements for the Municipal Roads General Permit with respect to hydrologically connected road segments. Information conveyed during the LHMP process included that if a homeowner installs an undersized culvert in their own driveway and water flow damages a town road – the town is liable for the costs of the damage. So, in other words, the Town is responsible for culverts installed on hydraulically connected roads. Chair wondered if the town could assist with costs to homeowners related to driveway culvert replacement to save the town money in the long run. Discussed updating the Road Access Policy with driveway design requirements.
- xv. Chair stated that, with respect to the MRGP, was unsure if a policy in the Town Plan was necessary other than to support the foremen and/or commissioner on the highway team with grant funding. One of the big problems and costs moving forward is that spans over 36 inches, which used to be culverts, are now required to be box culverts or bridges.
- xvi. River Corridors – Commissioner Andrew Seward said he would be curious what other towns do in their town plans. Wondering if it will impact individuals that own land along a river or if it is Town Land. Chair stated that only perennial streams with at least 0.5 square miles of watershed are included and will check with other towns.
- xvii. Commissioners looked at a map of what would be affected by river corridor protection ordinance.
- xviii. Chair stated if interested in investigating, could invite Barbara Noyes-Pulling (planner from RRPC) to one of our next meetings. Commissioner Andrew Seward stated he would be interested in learning

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what it entails and how much restriction it puts on everything around it. Unanimously agreed to invite RRPC planner to future meeting.

- xix. It was noted that a 5% increase in reimbursement if satisfied all five categories of mitigation would be a huge advantage to the town and get us 92.5% reimbursement for any recovery costs.
- xx. Chair gave an update on the status of new Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) panels for the Black and West River watersheds. Current maps are from 2008. A discovery process for new FIRM panels was held last summer. At this point we are 2 years away from having new preliminary FIRM panels for review (after work maps are produced after engineering field study and flood plain mapping).
- xxi. Chair asked Planning Commission for thoughts on the existing Flood Hazard Area ordinance. It was noted that the regulations could not be administered, until recently, due to the lack of a Board of Adjustment. The Board of Adjustment is not only responsible for appeals of the administrative review and permitting but also for issuing Conditional Use permits. Chair distributed screenshots of all places that have human activity within the FHA.
- xxii. Chair noted that many individuals in town may not even know the ordinance exists. Noted that he thinks it is appropriate to educate and inform individuals about the flood hazard ordinance – especially if their land lies within it. Also noted that the Town does not even have a permit application form. At a future meeting the Commission will assist with the creation of permit application forms. Commissioner Sullivan also suggested including information in the Chit Chat.
- xxiii. Agreed to next Steps: Invite Barbara Noyes-Pulling to a meeting, generate application form for working in Flood Hazard Area, get Jeff Chase’s opinion on ERAF.

6. Public Comments: none

7. Upcoming meetings

- a. Regular meeting – July 20th, 7:00 pm (3rd Wednesday)
- b. Special Meeting (Flood Resilience Plan continued)– August 3rd, 7:00pm

8. Meeting adjourned at 8:19pm

For the Commission,
Renee Sarmento, Clerk

In draft form until approved on July 20th, 2022