



Town of Mount Holly Planning Commission

Town Office & Remote Electronic – Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday March 15, 2023

7:00 P.M.

Commission Members Present: Jon McCann (Chair), Jim Seward (Vice Chair), Andrew Schulz, Brigid Sullivan, Andrew Seward,
Also Present: Renee Sarmiento (Clerk), Stephen Michel, Ethan Pepin

1. Chair called the meeting to order at 7:07pm.
2. Changes to agenda: none.
3. Approval of minutes
 - a. February 15th regular meeting minutes and March 1st special meeting minutes were approved as distributed.
4. Reports & Announcements
 - a. Administrative Officer: none
 - b. Planning Commission Chair
 - i. Chair stated he went to training for Permit Navigator on 2/22. Permit specialists are now called Community Assistants. State wants people to start using permit navigator instead of contacting them. They reinforced that permit navigator results should be part of town permit applications. Confirmed that river corridors and flood hazard mapping is included. Chair gave state suggestion to add contact information for municipal officials on the permit navigator report. People who do not have access to the internet will need assistance.
 - ii. Other trainings: VLCT is holding an open meeting law training. If Commissioners would like to participate let Chair know. Chair stated members from all boards might wish to attend. Chair will let Select Board know. (4/19 at 10am) Stephen Michel asked that the Chair forward the link to him for the Board of Adjustment.
 - iii. Chair had a conversation with Ed Bove - what if any influence town might have on energy siting such as wind and solar. Without an enhanced energy plan there is not a lot we can do. We can identify areas in the plan that have value to the town that should limit development in general but not exclude energy projects specifically. Separately, there are a number of towns around Mount Holly putting controls on short term B&Bs due to their impact on affordable housing and other disruptions. There was interest in this reflected in the recent town-wide survey. There are a couple tools to consider. Will get into more detail at a later time.
5. Correspondence
 - a. Subdivision proposals: None
 - b. Building Construction Registrations: None
 - c. Wastewater system and potable water supply permits: None
 - d. Email / Other: None.
6. New business
7. Unfinished business
 - a. Town Plan: Transportation Plan (guest Ethan Pepin)
 - i. Ethan sent around a draft via email and brought paper copies to the meeting.

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- ii. Ethan touched on things added to the last draft. This included review of the Traffic Volume and Safety section.
 - iii. Public Transit - Ethan had a conversation with The Bus. Almost 5% of riders are coming from Mount Holly. 90% boarding are heading East (Ludlow-Okemo) and 10% heading West (Rutland). Question of why most of the use is at the Healdville stop and not the Belmont stop. This could be a lack of parking and safety at the Belmont stop. Commissioner A. Seward stated it could also be due to the presence of seasonal rentals close to the Healdville stop, such as in Mount Holly Heights. He confirmed that Harry's parking lot is part of the state highway right of way, and is public.
 - iv. Parking - need to find the piece of land to do it on. If a state-owned parking lot is already there, it may be an option. Commissioner A. Seward also suggested the possibility of a lifelong lease of property as it is difficult to get the state to sell land. Stephen Michel brought up the suggestion of school bus drop off and how there was no safe place. Stephen stated a park-and-ride would be a logical place for a school bus stop. Chair noted a park-and-ride near three-phase power would make it easier to install an EV Charger.
 - v. Scenic byways - Ethan did work to find out what scenic byways mean and if it is feasible to designate VT-103 through Mount Holly. Ethan stated in the past there was a large pot of money for scenic byways, for putting up signage and making it an attraction/pamphlets & web posting. Priorities have shifted and money has disappeared, so there is not a lot of money that designating a scenic byway would get you. VT-100 byway system has a number of sections that extend off that, including VT-103 through Ludlow. It could be simple to have 103 in Mount Holly added. Council would need to meet and vote to designate. Commissioner Schulz asked about the upside of designation. Ethan said the benefit would be any kind of guide about the town/marketing and could be picked up by travel writers.
 - vi. Ethan reviewed the need for a Highway Access Policy – the town will need a formal policy adopted by the Select Board.
 - vii. Chair suggested adding a reference to the new traffic ordinance.
 - viii. Ethan will get back to the Commission on ownership of the bridges. The Chair will have another conversation with Martina Barnes - US Forest Service district ranger.
8. Public Comments:
- a. Stephen Michel stated he feels that in the publicity for the proposed flood hazard and river corridors bylaw the claim of a 40% increase of funds received by the town is in error. Commissioner Andrew Seward and Commissioner Andrew Schulz clarified that a 40% increase is what ERAF will pay and is a correct representation. Stephen stated the annual report said something contrary. Commissioner Schulz read aloud the fact sheet the Commission prepared, which described a 40% increase in state funding. The Chair read aloud what was actually included in the annual report, which said the same thing. Stephen said something different was put into the Chit Chat. Chair reminded Stephen that the Select Board put that into the Chit Chat but to his knowledge it copied the same text. Chair explained ERAF and the matching process. Mr. Michel withdrew his comment.
9. Upcoming meetings
- a. Select Board Hearing - March 29th at 6:30pm, Kyle Medash and Chair will be present, Commissioners are welcome to attend.
 - b. Special Meeting - April 5th at 7:00pm (land use)
 - c. Regular meeting - April 19th at 7:00 pm (3rd Wednesday)
10. Meeting adjourned at 8:48pm
- For the Commission,
Renee Sarmiento, Planning Commission Clerk.
- In draft form until approved on April 19, 2023