



TOWN OF STOWE PLANNING COMMISSION Meeting Minutes February 5, 2024

The Town of Stowe Planning Commission held a meeting on **Monday February 5, 2024**, starting at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was held at the Stowe Town Office with remote participation available via Zoom. The meeting began at 5:30 pm.

Members present included Mila Lonetto, Bob Davison, Chuck Ebel, Heather Snyder, Brian Hamor, Jill Anne, John Muldoon, and Neil Percy. Staff Sarah McShane was present. Others present included Barbara Baraw and Robi Artman-Hodge.

The meeting was called to order by Chair M.Lonetto at approximately 5:30 pm.

Adjustments to the Agenda & Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items

There were no public comments. Chair Lonetto requested to adjust the agenda to add a brief discussion on drafting a follow-up letter of support to the Selectboard regarding the short-term rental ordinance. The Commission agreed to adjust the agenda accordingly to allow for such discussion.

Review Prior Meeting Minutes [01/09/2024]

C.Ebel motioned to approve the meeting minutes from January 9th. J.Muldoon seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Town Plan Update- Anticipated Process & Timeline

Staff McShane provided a brief presentation regarding the Stowe Town Plan. She discussed the following general topics: what is a municipal plan; why municipal plans are important; the history of planning in Stowe; an overview of the existing plan and its contents; and the anticipated timeline/schedule for updating the plan. B.Baraw mentioned that the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence is coming up and activities are planned for 2026. She suggested the two could somehow be merged regarding dreams for the future. Members discussed what the term 'community' meant to them individually and how it has a variety of meanings to different people. Members discussed Stowe's current housing issues and suggested that housing will be a central issue in the plan. Members discussed the need to better understand the existing housing stock and opportunities to ensure the community remains intact. Members noted that Lamoille Housing Partnership is completing a broader housing needs assessment. R.Artman-Hodge noted that the housing information would be helpful to the Energy Committee. Members discussed updating the goals, policies, and tasks. N.Percy mentioned that the last time the Commission reviewed the plan, they reviewed it chapter by chapter and made modifications where they found needed. B.Baraw offered to share her housing assessment research. H.Snyder shared that she hoped the update process could involve stewardship, community building, and an opportunity to celebrate all who live here. She suggested the process consider the next seven generations and consider what community means in Stowe. Members discussed Act 47 and its potential impacts within sewer service area. M.Lonetto suggested that the purpose of each zoning district be evaluated. C.Ebel mentioned that he desired the plan to include improved timeframes rather than short-term, mid-term, etc. Members discussed how to prioritize competing goals, find balance, and consider fiscal costs. J.Muldoon mentioned that he sees three plan elements- inclusive community; vibrant economy; and conserving natural beauty. Members discussed asking for broad feedback as well as specific questions (i.e. if we can only focus on one thing, what should it be?) B.Hamor asked if there was a map showing all of the town-owned properties; N.Percy asked for a map of all conserved property in Stowe. Members discussed Mayo Farm and the conservation easement. Members discussed open meeting law and the requirements for forming

subcommittees. Staff mentioned a recent settlement agreement involving the Town of Norwich. The topic will be placed on the March agenda for additional discussion. N.Percy suggested the Commission recognize that the plan is not going to solve all issues but rather help tackle issues.

Short-Term Rental Discussion

M.Lonetto asked the Commission to consider sending a follow-up letter of support to the Selectboard regarding the adoption of a short-term rental ordinance. C.Ebel suggested attaching the Commission's original letter and reiterate the Commission's support. N.Percy suggested for the Commission not to submit a follow-up letter and simply let the Selectboard do their job. J.Muldoon mentioned that the Selectboard needs support. B.Hamor suggested inviting the community to the Planning Commission meetings to discuss the issue and recommended a minor revision to the draft letter. Following discussion, B.Hamor made a motion to submit a follow-up letter of support to the Selectboard; J.Anne seconded. The motion passed 6-1, with N.Percy voting in opposition.

Other Business/News Updates

The next regularly scheduled meeting is cancelled because of the holiday so the Commission decided to have a brief special meeting on Tuesday February 13th at 5:30 (zoom participation only) to finalize a community engagement question(s) for the Town Meeting Day. Members were asked to each prepare five possible questions for discussion at the next meeting and continue to consider possible themes.

The meeting adjourned shortly after 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah McShane, Planning & Zoning Director