

PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes
Wednesday, January 8, 2025, at 6:00 PM
Town of Fairlee Town Hall
Grange Room
75 Town Common Road
Fairlee, VT 05045

Wednesday, January 8, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: Acting Chair Danen called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

PRESENT

Commission Members: Smith Reed (Present); Lynne Fitzhugh (Present); Moriah Ludwig (Present); Susanne Pacilio (Present); Miranda Clemson (Present); Doug Tift (Present); and Tim Danen, Acting Chair (Present). A quorum was met.

Zoning Administrator: Chris Brimmer (Present)

Minutes Clerk: Joanna Bligh (Present)

Visitors

In Person: None.

Online: Deecie Denison.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Fitzhugh made the motion, and Pacilio seconded the motion, to approve the minutes from December 4, 2024.

Vote: All approved, none opposed, and none abstained. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Fitzhugh announced a public meeting sponsored by the ad hoc Conservation Committee Exploratory Group, which will act as an advisory group, to be held January 21, 2025, at 6:30 PM at the Town Hall, second floor, at 6:30 PM. Fitzhugh noted that representatives from other Conservation Commissions will serve as a panel to discuss their commissions' work in their towns. A staff member from the VT Agency of Natural Resources will also be in attendance. Fitzhugh stated that the session will be informative and advertising for the event is widespread.
- Tift will be moderator at the meeting.
- Tift noted that the Town Plan states that the Town should "consider a Conservation Commission."
- Pacilio stated that the implementation sections of the Town Plan, such as natural resources, culture, land use, and recreation could be issues directed to the Conservation Commission.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Acting Chair Danen introduced ZA Brimmer for his report. ZA Brimmer reported the following:

- The Development Review Board (DRB) approved the conceptual site plan for the Bridge+Main project, which has 19 units consisting of studios, 1-bedroom units, and 2-bedroom units.

- Fitzhugh asked what the Planning Commission can do, and ZA Brimmer noted that the Planning Commission can review the streetscape designs and the density issues on Bridge St. vis á vis the Village Master Plan.
- Denison stated that there will be a full presentation to the public, the Selectboard, the Planning Commission, and the ZBA as the Chapman's Place/The Denison project continues, and she noted that the groundbreaking is scheduled for fall 2025.

Open Discussion of Main St. vs. VT Agency of Transportation (AOT)

- ZA Brimmer discussed the inconsistencies between the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) and the AOT relating to the Town taking over the management of Main St. so that sidewalks and bike lanes can be built, and trees can be planted.
- The main obstacle is that Fairlee does not have a municipal highway department, and the use of highway contractors may not be approved by the AOT.
- ZA Brimmer noted that the Town gets state aid if it has a highway department.
- If a highway department were created, it would take a bond of \$2-3M for equipment, buildings, and staff.
- The members discussed the options, such as asking local legislators to intervene for the Town.

MOTION: Tiftt made the motion, and Reed seconded the motion, to request that the Selectboard engage state of Vt representatives (Orange-2, /Monique Priestly and Larry Hart, Sr.) to meet the requirements needed to manage Main St. in Fairlee by using a private contractor for highway work.

Vote: All approved, none opposed, and none abstained. The motion passed unanimously.

Economic Development Plan

ZA Brimmer provided the members with an updated Economic Development Plan document and asked if they could review it to discuss at the next meeting. ZA Brimmer noted that what needs to be added is climate sustainability and energy efficiency models. The members discussed the need to focus on climate resiliency with:

- Air quality issues from pine trees with "sunlight outgassing" or smog.
- Air conditioning is needed in many homes.
- Availability of cooling and warming centers.
- Denison brought the members' attention to the work of the Hubbard Brook Research Foundation (<https://hubbardbrook.org/hubbard-brook-research-foundation/>) in North Woodstock, VT.

NEXT MEETING:

- Regular Planning Commission meeting on **February 5, 2025**.

ADJOURN

MOTION: Fitzhugh made the motion, and Pacilio seconded the motion, to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 PM.

Vote: All approved, none opposed, and none abstained. The motion passed unanimously.

Transcribed by Joanna Bligh, Minutes Clerk