

**Town of Hinesburg**  
**Planning Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**January 12, 2022**

*Approved January 26, 2022*

**Members Present:** Lenore Budd (via Zoom), Marie Gardner (via Zoom), John Kiedaisch, Denver Wilson (via Zoom).

**Members Absent:** James Donegan, Barbara Forauer, Nina Friscia.

**Also:** Alex Weinhagen (Director of Planning & Zoning); Amy Coonradt (Recording Secretary)

**Members of the Public:** Chuck Reiss.

Denver W. called the meeting to order at approximately 7:15 PM.

**1. Agenda Changes**

None.

**2. Election of Officers**

- a. Chairperson
- b. Vice Chairperson

Postponed due to lack of quorum.

**3. Public Comment for Non-agenda Items**

None at this time.

**4. Minutes of December 22 Meeting**

No motion to approve due to lack of quorum.

**5. Energy Plan action item review/discussion**

- a. Coordinate with Energy Committee on action items to work on in 2022 (*Energy Committee invited*)

Alex W. said that the Planning Commission has been discussing adding projects to its 2022 work plan and that several Commissioners indicated a desire to work on action items in the new energy chapter of the Town Plan. He said that for the last several meetings, Commissioners have been discussing which of the items could be a focus for 2022, and they agreed that a good next step would be consulting with the Energy Committee on the action items.

Chuck R. said that they have actively been pursuing beefing up the renewable energy component of the Town Plan; specifically, they went out to bid on several RFPs for solar energy in the Town. He spoke about options of having individuals buy into solar or having a third party administer it and give individuals a break on their electricity costs. He noted that the solar project on the Town garage was done by a third party and the Town is benefitting from it. He spoke about the landfill above the Town garage, saying that the Town signed an agreement with Aegis. He said there is a community solar component to it, along with a third party that sells the electricity back to the Town. He also spoke about putting solar panels on the police station. He said that they are exploring other sites for community solar in GMP territory.

Chuck R. then spoke about how the Energy Committee is pursuing the installation of electric vehicle charging stations in Town. He said that GMP has a small grant (\$750) per charging station that they applied for with Norwich Solar. He said that the total estimated cost for this would be about \$8,000. He said that the Energy Committee wants to encourage the Town to consider switching to electric cars by having a spot downtown where they could charge and leave their cars. He said that this proposal was brought to the Selectboard but that it didn't pass. He said that if the Planning Commission is interested in helping flesh out a better proposal, they would welcome that assistance. He also mentioned that there might be grant money to help supplement the cost of it. He noted that the Town Manager had been considering including funding in the capital budget to help with this.

Chuck R. also said that an energy analysis is being scheduled for Town Hall in order to get the building to net zero energy. He said that they have hired a contractor (New Leaf Design) who will conduct an analysis and produce an energy model to determine the thermal needs of the building and how its thermal performance can be enhanced. He said that they could also supply heat pumps to meet the demand of the building. He noted that they had looked into installing solar panels on Town Hall's roof, but said that the Town Hall roof needs to be replaced prior to that.

Alex W. asked if the Energy Committee is still doing work on weatherization in the larger community (not just municipal buildings). Chuck R. replied that they are actively talking with surrounding municipalities' energy committees and are planning to conduct a joint weatherization outreach/meeting to households. He said that there are additional grants and incentives at the state level if homeowners want to pursue ways to bring their household energy down to net zero.

John K. asked if the analysis of Town Hall looked at multiple options for providing heat and power for the building (besides heat pumps). Chuck R. replied that the consultant modeled energy output both before and after weatherization of the building, and that that model could be used to determine energy output for different types of energy efficiency options.

John K. and Lenore B. commended the Energy Committee for its work despite only having three committee members at this time. Lenore B. noted that there are a number of action items in the energy chapter of the Town Plan for which the Planning Commission is the designated lead. She asked which of those items would have the greatest returns and should be the highest priority at this time. Chuck R. replied that things like changing the regulations to require more energy efficiency of developments or requiring building code upgrades would be impactful.

John K. spoke about one of the priorities involving installing electric charging stations and converting to electric vehicles. Chuck R. noted that there are electric charger stations both at CVU and NRG. He said that having more charging stations at larger developments would be great. Alex W. noted that developers aren't required to discuss electric charging stations in their plans because they are not required to in the regulations. Chuck R. said that it would be helpful if the regulations could speak to minimum expectations for developments being E/V ready. He said that it might make the most sense for the Planning Commission to work on the regulations and for the Energy Committee to work on producing data and analyses of cost, such as how much it would cost to install an E/V charger in town.

Lenore B. noted that the Planning Commission does not have jurisdiction or authority over existing businesses, but should focus on modifications to the regulations. Alex W. agreed, but said that there are other mechanisms that could be used to realize goals outside of a regulatory context. Denver W. agreed that a good starting point is through regulations and ensuring that new developments are charger-

ready. He asked whether there is documentation currently being revised that relates to that. Alex W. replied that there is a renewable energy section of the zoning requirements, which would be a good location. He said that another option would be to enact ordinances (though this is done through the Selectboard). Alex W. spoke about several areas of regulation that could be tweaked to get at some of the energy goals discussed above.

Denver W. suggested tackling some of the low-hanging fruit, like dwelling charging readiness. Alex W. agreed, saying that smaller, incremental changes may be easier to enact than a comprehensive energy package. Other Planning Commissioners agreed with this approach.

Chuck R. said that the Energy Committee had previously made several suggestions to the Town's zoning regulations that could be tightened up that could make a big difference.

## **6. Other Business & Correspondence**

### **a. News, announcements, etc**

Alex W. said that the Town applied for a municipal bylaw modernization grant from the State, which is designed to help municipalities update zoning to be more conducive to inclusive housing—he said that Hinesburg was awarded one of those grants. He said that the Town will outsource this work to the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC), who will analyze Hinesburg's regulations. He said that this work will likely begin at the beginning of the next fiscal year (in June/July).

Alex W. noted that Williston and Richmond are holding public hearings in February to review proposed zoning regulation changes. He said that Williston has developed a form-based code for the Taft's Corner area. He said that Richmond is considering a zoning change to require (new) gas stations to have electric vehicle charging stations.

### **b. RR1 district – review of draft public outreach**

The Planning Commission reviewed the letter that had been drafted by staff for outreach to RR1 landowners. Denver W. suggested asking landowners whether the development potential for their property is sufficient. Alex W. said that this would go out to around 80 landowners, and that the goal would be to distribute this communication now and invite comment at February Planning Commission meetings.

### **c. Agenda items for January 26 meeting**

Alex W. noted that this meeting would include a public hearing on revised contractor yards/home occupation vehicle repair services regulations.

The Planning Commission will also continue discussing the Energy Plan action items and related renewable energy topics.

Denver W. **adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:45 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Amy Coonradt, Recording Secretary