

Planning Commission
Martin Memorial Hall
5459 Rte 5 Ascutney, VT
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
Special Meeting
Thursday, August 12, 2021 6:30 PM

Planning Commission Members Present:

Paul Tillman
Michael Todd
Howard Beach
Tyler Harwell

Planning Commission Members Absent: Joe Bublat

Attendees: Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager, deForest Bearse

1.) Call to Order by Chair Howard Beach at 6:32 pm

2.) Comments from Citizens, Planning Commission Members and Town Manager

Michael Todd apologized for the heated discussion at the last meeting.

3.) Approval of Meeting Minutes – July 26, 2021 & August 9, 2021

Paul Tillman made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from July 26, 2021.

Tyler Harwell – 2nd

No discussion

Vote - unanimous

Meeting minutes for August 9th had not been received. Tabled until next meeting.

4.) Vote to Warn a Public Hearing for a Subdivision Application Review on Drumlin Road for 9/13/21.

Michael Todd made a motion to warn a public hearing for a subdivision application review on Drumlin Road for 9/13/21 at 6:30 pm.

Paul Tillman – 2nd

No discussion

Vote – unanimous

5.) Vote to Warn a Public Hearing for a Subdivision Application Review on Goulden Ridge Road for 9/13/21.

Tyler Harwell made a motion to warn a public hearing for a subdivision application review on Goulden Ridge Road for 9/13/21 at 7:15pm.

Paul Tillman – 2nd

Discussion:

Michael Todd suggested changing the time to 7:00 pm.

Tyler Harwell amended his motion to made a motion to warn a public hearing for a subdivision application review on Goulden Ridge Road for 9/13/21 at 7:00pm.

Paul Tillman – 2nd

No further discussion

Vote – unanimous

6.) Discussion: Interim Plan - Land Use Administrator

Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager has contracted with Regional Planning in the Interim until a new Land Use Administrator can be found. Alex Taft from Regional Planning has agreed to take over the Land Use Administrator for at total of 10 hours per week. He will review emails and permit applications.

7.) Vote to Support Town Manager Proposal - Combined Position

Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager proposed combining the Land Use Administrator and Listers positions along with using NEMRC. He also gave a proposed job description for that position would encompass.

Please see Attachment A – Administrative Duties – Assessing for the break down of what would be covered under NEMRC and the Town of Weathersfield.

Howard Beach asked if NEMRC would be a permanent position.

Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager said yes, if the Select Board approved.

They have also discussed appointing an assessor with a stipend of \$500 per year. If this is the direction that the Town decides to go in, Carolyn Hier has offered to come in to train a new Assessor. Carolyn has been hired on a part-time basis as an assessor.

Appointing NEMRC as an assessor would cause the Town to overspend in the general find, however, it would the assessor line item in the budger would be under spent, balancing the budget.

Michael Todd asked if there would be a cost savings to the Town.

Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager said that while he would like to say yes, until it happens he could not be confident saying it definitely would, however, looking at the numbers right now the Town would not go over budget.

Tyler Harwell asked if the Town Manager could comment on why there is a 2/3 vacancy for the Listers.

Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager stated that they both resigned.

Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager also noted that there are 2 options for this scenario:

1.) Appoint 2 more Listers

2.) Appoint an Assessor

Another potential option would be to combine the assessor and land use administrator position.

Michael Todd asked deForest Bearse if she had enough exposure to have an opinion on this as the previous Land Use Administrator.

deForest said if there were enough hours to create a full-time position, this would be a good way to solve some of the issues.

Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager also sent this proposal to John Broker Campbell at the ZBA. His response was:

‘... I fully support the idea of combining the positions to make a more attractive full-time job which will hopefully attract quality candidates. I look forward to being a part of the interview process moving forward and will plan to make any subsequent discussions on the position with the planning commission (it was simply the late notice; I am interested in participating fully).’

Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager asked the Planning Commission to sign the letter below in support of combining the 2 positions.

Dear Selectboard Members,

On behalf of the Town of Weathersfield Planning Commission we wish to express our strong support for combining the offices of the Listers and Land Use to create 1 full-time position, contracting with NEMRC, and continuing to keep an elected board of listers with an annual stipend of \$500 per lister.

The proposal contracts the high-level assessment services to NEMRC and adds administrative and tax mapping duties and responsibilities to a combined position with NEMRC support and training. It is our understanding that NEMRC provides similar services to several other towns within the State of Vermont, and we support a similar arrangement in Weathersfield.

We would like to reiterate our strong support for this position and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Respectfully,
Brandon Gulnick
Town Manager

Michael Todd made a motion to recommend the Select Board combine the Land Use Administrator and the Assessor positions, title to be determined.

Tyler Harwell – 2nd

No further discussion

Vote – unanimous

Tyler Harwell made a motion in support of the Planning Commission signing the letter in support of combining the positions of Assessor and Land Use Administrator.

Howard Beach – 2nd

No further discussion

Vote – unanimous

8.) Discussion: Process for Hiring the Combined Position

Candidates will be vetted through VLOCT

9.) Discussion: Items for Future Agendas

- Energy section of the Town Plan
- Airport

- Discussion about closing the hearing at the Select Board meeting and next steps.
- Noise Ordinance review & sound meter discussion

10.) Any other business that can be legally discussed

Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager let the Planning Commission know that he and deForest Bearse are going to start meeting next week to review the checklists and processes.

deForest let the Planning Commission know that there is a State generated checklist, once you go through the process and the checklist is completed, you give to the Town Clerk for certification.

These can be found at VT Planners Information Center.

deForest Bearse also made a proposal since the bylaws are done in a “vacuum” that the changes seem like a surprise. When State law changed it gave options to Towns for Select Board to make changes. She proposed that the Select Board send large changes to the Town Meeting. The Planning Commission will take this under advisement.

11.) Adjourn

Tyler Harwell made a motion to adjourn.

Howard Beach – 2nd

No discussion

Vote – unanimous.

Next Planning Commission Meeting is scheduled for Monday, August, 23, 2021 at 6:30 pm at Martin Memorial Hall.

Respectfully,
Chauncie Tillman
Recording Secretary

Planning Commission

177
178
179
180
181
182
183
184
185
186
187
188
189
190
191
192
193

Howard Beach, Chair

Joseph Bublat, Chairperson

Tyler Harwell, Chairperson

Paul Tillman, Vice Chair

Michael Todd, Chairperson

DRAFT