

Hartford Planning Commission Workshop

3/12/18

Draft Minutes

Attendance: The following individuals attended the meeting which was held at the Hartford Town Hall in Meeting Room 2 at 171 Bridge Street in White River Junction on Monday, March 12, 2018. Chair Bruce Riddle called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Planning Commission Members: Jacques Harlow, Robin Adair Logan, Peter Merrill, John Reid and chair Bruce Riddle.

Staff: Planning and Development Director Lori Hirshfield and Town Planner Matt Osborn.

Others: None

Electric Vehicle Charging Station Grant Application: Lori Hirshfield reported that the Town is applying for a grant for an electric vehicle charging station. It will include two dual charging stations and be located in the South Main Street Parking Lot. The grant will be leveraged with a previously awarded Green Mountain Power Company grant. Bruce Riddle made a motion to support the electric vehicle charging station grant application. The motion was seconded by Peter Merrill and approved by a 5 to 0 vote.

Master Plan or Town Plan: Matt Osborn noted that the term Master Plan is a New Hampshire term that stemmed from Hartford being a member of the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) for many years. He stated that Hartford left the UVLSRPC in 2003. He stated that in Vermont, the term Town Plan is commonly used. He suggested changing the name in this update to Town Plan. The Planning Commission agreed.

Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (TRORC) Comments: Matt Osborn reported that Lori Hirshfield and he met with Senior Planner Kevin Geiger of the TRORC about the Town Plan update on January 29th. Kevin agreed to conduct a review of the Town Plan.

a. 2014 TRORC Comments Hartford Master Plan: Matt Osborn went through the following comments made in the 2014 TRORC review of the Master Plan:

- 9.b. Has the manufacture and marketing of value added agriculture and forest products been encouraged? *The economic aspects of agricultural and forestry are not explicitly addressed in the Plan, but the value of agriculture and forestry is. The next revision of this plan should include a more substantial discussion about the economic value of sustaining agriculture and forestry.*
- 9.c. Is the use of locally-grown food products encouraged? *The development of locally grown food is not addressed. State planning goals expect that communities will encourage locally grown foods. The next version of this plan should address this.*
- 9.d. Are sound forest and agricultural management practices encouraged? *Use of Accepted Agricultural Practices (AAPs) and Accepted Silvicultural Practices (ASP) are not specifically discussed. State planning goals expect that communities will encourage AAPs and ASPs. The next version of this plan should address this.*
- 10.a. Have strategies to facilitate the appropriate extraction of earth resources and the proper restoration and preservation of the aesthetic qualities been addressed? *Earth Resources are discussed in a very general fashion. More detail on this issue could be provided in the next plan.*
- 12.a. Do public facilities and services address plans for such services as fire and police protection, emergency medical services, schools, water supply and sewage and solid waste disposal? *Yes the Plan discusses utilities and services. The Plan includes recommendations to*

improve these systems. It should be noted that this chapter lacks sufficient detail with regard to how much these priority projects might cost and how they might be funded. The next iteration of this plan will need to include more detail as is required by statute.

- Utility and Facility Plan: *This chapter lacks specific detail with regard to how much these priority projects might cost and how they might be funded.*
- A Statement of Policies on Preservation of Rare and Irreplaceable Natural Areas, Scenic and Historic Features and Resources: *The Plan contains thorough inventories of scenic and historic resources, but does not have clear policies about their preservation.*
- Energy Plan: *The Hartford Energy Plan is limited in scope and...*

Matt Osborn noted that these comments will be addressed in the Plan update.

- b. 2018 TRORC Comments Hartford Master Plan: Matt Osborn reported that at the January 29th meeting with Kevin , he agreed to conduct a review of the Town Plan. The following are Kevin's comments that Matt believes are worth noting:

- *I suggest looking through them (recommendations) and seeing if any have not moved in a long time they should be cut.*
- *Page 32, I think the build out is a great tool, but get confused as it may be referencing zoning that is no longer there, and so nice history but is it in need of updating again? This is cleared up some on p 59, so maybe these two parts could be put together with more text to explain the 2008 zoning changes.*
- *Pages 39-40 I like the data on parcelization, but it could be even more useful by district to show where that is happening.*
- *Population Chapter, good data but I would use that as a reference doc and condense to the findings so this is just a few pages. The points on schools and seniors are important.*
- *Housing Chapter, loads of data, but charts could convey the meaning better than tables I think, and much of this could be condensed into background materials. Also, we plan to work with UVLSRPC on housing over the next year so stay tuned. We already know that a lot of new housing is needed and of course much of that would be in Hartford as our regional center. Our approach will probably try to break out the need in terms of population sections, so I like the breakout you have of various groups and housing types. We hope to have example graphics of what proposed recommendations would look like, and so that may be useful for your, but you could also use images from town with the new orthos.*
- *Page 120, the ED vision from 2002 may still be good, but it is old and should be checked on to see if you want it. I think this is one of the chapters to give extra effort.*
- *Data on p 124-129 is very stale*
- *Community Facilities and Services needs an overall update. I would condense where possible.... for example, the list on p 157 is the nugget of what is needed. Statute calls for estimates of cost and methods of financing these. We are usually pretty lenient in review on these for smaller towns, but Hartford has done some capital work and so if there is a recommendation, such as the detailed recommendation #23 on p 177, I would put a rough cost in there. If it is more pie in the sky stage, such as #32 then that is obviously more vague. Where the plan puts forth a recommendation to make a plan, such as #31, see if it has been done, or if it really will be.*
- *Utilities, ditto on cost estimates. I would really look at the broadband and cell parts as these are critical now.*

- *Transportation needs an update, like other parts, but seems like it is in pretty good shape overall and a place to go lighter.*
- *Pages 242 -243 seems like a good place to discuss connectivity and forest blocks. I suggest using the BioFinder maps as the areas where these are, and then you can figure out which of these are most important to the town and show those too. Need a few related recommendations on p 259 per statute.*
- *The listing of specific scenic areas, as started on page 249 is great and needed if one is to advocate protections for areas and not have it be too vague. We are just getting there on the regional scale.*
- *I skipped Energy as I know you are working on that.*

Review of Town Plan & Level of Update: Matt Osborn presented staff’s review of the update effort.

CHAPTER	LAST SIGNIFICANT UPDATE	COMMISSION	LEVEL OF UPDATE
Historic & Cultural Resources	2003	HPC	Moderate
Land Use	2014	PC	Minor to Moderate
Population	2012/2014	PC	None
Housing	2012/2014	PC	Minor to moderate
Economic Development	2003	PC	Minor
Community Facilities & Services	2003	PC	Moderate
Utilities	2007	PC	Moderate
Public Roads & Transportation	2007	PC	Moderate
Natural Resources	2003	CC	Major
Energy	1993/2003	EC	Major
Relationship to Adjacent Towns & Region	2014	PC	Moderate
Implementation	2003/2007/2014	PC	Moderate
Flood Resilience	New Require.	CRO	New Section

PC - Planning Commission

HPC - Historic Preservation Commission

EC - Energy Committee

CC - Conservation Commission

CRO - Community Resilience Organization

John Reid thought the level of effort for the population chapter should be changed from none to minor. The Planning Commission agreed. He also suggested including updates to school enrollment and other relevant data.

Matt Osborn noted that the Economic Development chapter was last updated in 2003, was the result of a Municipal Planning Grant and was well-written. He stated that with the short time-frame for the current update, it is limited what can be included in the update. Lori Hirshfield suggested pursuing a grant for the update after this one. She also noted that there are regional and statewide studies that have been completed in the past few years regarding the creative economy and other economic development information that we can use in the present update.

Regarding other issues to be addressed in the Town Plan update, Peter Merrill suggested the effects of climate change and invasive insects.

Bruce Riddle suggested for the Housing Section to include the shortage of housing and the need for consistency with the Regional Plan.

Town Plan Schedule: Matt Osborn noted that the current Town Plan was adopted on May 27, 2014 and will expire on May 26, 2019. As a result, staff has developed a schedule that has the first draft completed by the end of October, 2018 in order to have sufficient time for community input, revisions to the Plan and the public hearings process. Lori Hirshfield noted that Town departments are already working on the update.

Creating a More Visually Engaging, User-friendly Town Plan: Matt Osborn noted that staff hopes to create a more visually engaging, user-friendly plan. He distributed a copy of the Brattleboro Town Plan. The Planning Commission agreed that it is an excellent example. Bruce Riddle suggested looking at the books of Edward Tufte as an excellent example of effective graphics. Lori Hirshfield suggested a possible Municipal Planning Grant application for the fall to help with layout and formatting.

Town Plan Steering Committee: Matt Osborn noted that in the past, a Steering Committee was involved with the Town Plan update. It consisted of the Planning Commission as well as representatives from town commissions and the Selectboard. Staff intends to utilize the Steering Committee with this update. The Planning Commission agreed.

Public Input for the Town Plan: Lori Hirshfield noted that staff is formulating ideas for public input and wanted the Planning Commission's thoughts on it. She noted that the Town did a community survey in 2016 that we can use. She suggested doing community-wide meetings or village meetings this spring and hold meetings again after a Draft Plan is completed. The Planning Commission agreed. The Planning Commission prefers village meetings for the initial community input meetings this spring.

John Reid stated that it is difficult to get people to come to meetings and emphasized the importance of publicizing the meetings. Jacques Harlow suggested a weekly update to reporters. Peter Merrill suggested engaging the Quechee Lakes Landowners Association. There was general agreement that the publicity to multiple groups to attend the meetings is important since there is not sufficient staff time to meet individually with all the public and private groups and organizations.

Bruce Riddle stressed the importance of having a well thought out framework for the village meetings. Lori Hirshfield stated that staff is looking into assistance on the Town Plan update from the TRORC and what they can do for Hartford as part of our membership dues.

Next Meeting: Bruce Riddle noted that the next meeting on the Town Plan is scheduled for Monday, April 9th and will include the Town Plan Steering Committee.

Adjournment: John Reid made a motion to adjourn. Peter Merrill seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.