

Hartford Planning Commission/Town Plan Steering Committee Meeting

6/11/18

Approved Minutes

Attendance: The following individuals attended the meeting which was held at the Hartford Town Hall in Room 2 at 171 Bridge Street in White River Junction on Monday, June 11, 2018. The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m.

Peter Merrill	Planning Commission
Dave Sherman	Planning Commission
John Reid	Planning Commission
Pat Stark	Historic Preservation Commission
Martha McDaniel	Energy Commission
Kim Souza	Selectboard
Angie Emerson	Conservation Commission
Dylan Kreis	Community Resilience Organization
Lynn Luczkowski	Chamber of Commerce
Lori Hirshfield	Director of the Department of Planning and Development Services
Matt Osborn	Planner

Draft Minutes of the May 14, 2018 Meeting: Matt Osborn asked if there are any corrections to the Minutes of May 14, 2018. There were no corrections and the minutes were accepted as written.

Public Input for the Town Plan: Lori Hirshfield reported that the Town has a contract with consultants Rebecca Sanborn Stone and Delia Clark to facilitate four community forums for the general Town Plan update in addition to the energy planning process already under contract. The first community forum is scheduled for Monday, June 18th at the Hartford High School. She stated that the five community meetings will take place from June 18th to July 23rd.

Date	Topic	Location
Monday, June 18 th at 6:30 p.m.	Town Plan 101 & Important Priorities	Hartford High School
Monday, June 25 th at 6:30 p.m.	Energy & Transportation	VINS
Wednesday, July 11 th at 6:30 p.m.	Community Facilities/Services/Historic Preservation	West Hartford Library
Monday, July 16 th at 6:30 p.m.	Natural Resources & Land Use	Dothan Brook School
Monday, July 23 rd at 6:30 p.m.	Housing & Economic Development	Town Hall

Lori Hirshfield noted that the forums will have an interactive format and include an open house set up with large posters for attendees to provide comments as well as small group discussion of specific topics.

Staff will promote the forums through a variety of methods, such as the Town website, Town Listserv, Valley News advertisement, Valley News calendar, UV Daily, Facebook and e-mail lists. Staff also developed a flier for the series of forums. There was a discussion about groups to contact and e-mail lists. Kim Souza noted the importance of social media outlets.

Lori Hirshfield asked for facilitator volunteers for the 6/18 community meeting. John Reid, Angie Emerson, Dave Sherman and Peter Merrill volunteered.

Lori Hirshfield asked for volunteers for a working group to help staff develop questions for community forums 3-5. John Reid, Angie Emerson and Peter Merrill volunteered.

Land Use Chapter: Matt Osborn provided background information on the Land Use Chapter dating back to the 2003 and 2007 Plans. He described the community vision developed for the Land Use Chapter stemming from the extensive public outreach process:

1. Increase density in already developed areas with infrastructure (water & wastewater, close to community facilities & services and served by public transit).
2. Manage density of future development.
3. Protect scenic areas, open space, and wildlife corridors.
4. Preserve Hartford's historic settlement pattern, defined by compact villages surrounded by rural countryside.
5. Maintain the character of Hartford's rural countryside and support agriculture, forestry, and recreational uses in these areas as well as carefully planned low-density residential uses.
6. Maintain and enhance Hartford's heritage of working farm and forest lands as part of a sustainable, environmentally sound, local resource-based economy.
7. Maintain and enhance the open space and recreational "infrastructure" important for long-term health and quality of life of Hartford residents.

John Reid noted the changes in development trends from the last five years contrasted sharply from the previous decade. Peter Merrill agreed and noted the high cost of housing and economic challenges facing Vermont. Lori Hirshfield noted the large increase in housing downtown in the last two years and the Twin Pines Housing Trust project underway on Sykes Mountain Avenue. She stated that White River Junction housing is diverse. She noted that the challenge is trying to achieve balance.

John Reid noted that another challenge is attracting new residents to fill local and regional job requirements. Lori Hirshfield responded that we have an extremely low unemployment rate (2.2%) and housing vacancy is very low. Martha McDaniel noted the relationship between housing cost and density as well as the use of energy. In order to keep the cost of owning and maintaining a home low, there is a land use/transportation connection.

Kim Souza noted that the Selectboard is currently undertaking a visioning process and that it complements the Town Plan update visioning.

Lori Hirshfield noted the challenges and interconnectedness of the many topics in a Town Plan. She said the Steering Committee will dissect the components and questions and develop strategies and obtain input from the public.

Regarding the structure of the Town Plan document, Martha McDaniel suggested placing the community vision at the front of the document. The Steering Committee agreed.

In addition to land use recommendations that were implemented, Martha McDaniel stated that she would like to know other parts that were implemented in the Plan. Lori Hirshfield responded that staff will provide the information.

Next Meeting: Matt Osborn noted that two Steering Committee meetings on the schedule have been cancelled (June 25th and July 23rd) since the dates conflict with the Town Plan Community Forums. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 9th. at 5:30 p.m.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.