



City of Barre, Vermont
"Granite Center of the World"

Agenda for the Planning Commission

Meeting held on Thursday, May 27, 2021 ~ 6:30 PM

Remote Participation Only ~ Join Zoom Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/99490696535?pwd=cm9uVHlVSVAyeDIJVCtNQTIMQW5Zz09>

Meeting ID: 994 9069 6535

Passcode: 662777

Phone: 1 929 205 6099 US (New York – Long distance rates may apply)

1. Call to Order
2. Adjustments to the Agenda
3. Public Comment (*for something that is not on the agenda*)
4. Old Business:
 - A. Approve meeting minutes of May 13, 2021
5. New Business:
 - A. Discussion of Role in Promoting ARP (American Rescue Plan) Funds for Housing
6. Staff Updates
7. Roundtable
8. Adjourn

Planning Commission meetings are open to the public.

For questions about accessibility or to request accommodation, please call (802) 477-1465.

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Planning Commission
Held Thursday, May 13, 2021 at 6:30 pm**

The regular meeting of the Barre City Planning Commission was called to order on video conference by the Vice-Chair David Sichel at 6:32 pm. In attendance participating on video or phone were Commissioners Michael Hellein, Jackie Calder, Thom Lauzon, and Amanda Gustin. City staff members present via video or phone were Stephanie Quaranta, Assistant Director of Buildings and Community Services; Jeff Bergeron, Director of Buildings and Community Services; Steven Mackenzie, Barre City Manager; and Janet Shatney, Planning Director.

Absent: Commissioner Rachel Rudi

Adjustments to the Agenda: None.

Public Comment (for something that is not on the agenda): None.

Old Business –

A. Approve meeting minutes of March 11, 2021.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gustin and seconded by Commissioner Hellein to approve the March meeting minutes as presented, with no discussion, *motion carried unanimously*.

New Business –

A. Bike Path Status.

Asst. Director Quaranta went through the different segments already built within the city, as well as the Metro Way portion that is designed but not built, and the feasibility study that gives options to other potential connector areas. She suggested the Commission building upon the survey that was done a year ago to get an idea of what people may want and use in planning purposes.

B. Long Range Bike/Ped Plan.

Discussion over the types of bike lanes, either a set path or bike lanes occurred, and would built bike paths affect neighborhood property values. The City Manager said he does not foresee a bike lane on N. Main Street, but that concept could change in the future. Commissioner Gustin suggested initiatives for people to use the paths, maybe more of an awareness of them, and ways to encourage people to use the paths, perhaps an awareness campaign. Asst. Director Quaranta said they are looking into mapping to assist as well.

C. City-Wide Parks and Rec Plan.

Noting that we don't have any such plan and that authoring one is usually outsourced, the last time Asst. Director Quaranta said she priced a consultant to create one was upwards of \$38,000. Her preference would be to start with the playgrounds, and see more volunteer groups such as the Matheson Playground Group, at the other parks and playgrounds in the City. She would also like to see more intergenerational programs, that tie back into the senior center, or seniors in general. Further talk about Rotary Park as a destination with the pool, pavilions, courts and greenspace occurred, along with the bus routes that don't quite get riders to Rotary Park, and only to the Wall Street Complex on S. Main Street, and that walking along Mill Street would get users to the park.

47 **D. City-Wide Pedestrian Index and Complete Streets.**

48 Without having much knowledge on these items, Asst. Director Quaranta and City Manager
49 Mackenzie stated that perhaps staff need to sit and collect all the ideas and such and decide the
50 priority, and even decide if something like this isn't even necessary anymore, or that we cannot do
51 it.

52
53 Conversation segued toward developing additional affordable housing with the pending ARPA
54 (American Rescue Plan Act) funds, with the idea that the Commission could be working toward
55 ideas on affordable housing options, then forwarding them to Council with suggestions on how to
56 spend the funds. The Commission chose to meet on May 27th to get some ideas started.

57
58 **E. City-Wide Open Space Plan.**

59 Asst. Director Quaranta stated she is not well versed in what an open space plan is, and Director
60 Bergeron said that there have been several folks working on the open city lots for community
61 gardens, benches, rain gardens, etc. to help enhance neighborhoods with attractive little lots.

62
63 **F. Election of Officers.**

64 After short discussion, Commissioner Lauzon made the motion to elect Commissioner Sichel as
65 Chair, Commissioner Calder as Vice Chair, and Commissioner Hellein as Secretary for the ensuing
66 year. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Calder, *motion carried unanimously*.

67
68 **Staff Updates:** Director Shatney reviewed one of the two DRB approvals from last week; that
69 permit applications are lower than normal and the thinking is due to the cost of building materials,
70 and that the City was not able to hire an Assessor from the pool of candidates.

71
72 **Roundtable:** Commissioner Lauzon spoke of the Goldsbury development, and not only the
73 ARPA funds but the pending \$250M coming to the State of Vermont.

74
75 **Adjourn:** A motion was made by Commissioner Lauzon and seconded by Commissioner Calder
76 to adjourn at 8:21 pm.

77
78 There is an audio recording of this meeting, and was recorded on the video conference platform.

79
80 Respectfully submitted,
81
82 Janet E. Shatney, Planning Director

https://www.timesargus.com/news/covid19/town-waiting-for-more-details-for-arp-funds/article_572b29ef-13d0-5b81-8195-fad6fd5f6210.html

Town waiting for more details for ARP funds

By Eric Blaisdell Staff Writer

May 19, 2021

BARRE TOWN — Local officials are taking a wait-and-see approach to any funds they may receive from the federal American Rescue Plan.

At the Select Board's regular meeting Tuesday night, Town Manager Carl Rogers said he had attended a webinar earlier in the day put on by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns about use of those federal dollars. The plan, passed into law earlier this year in response to the coronavirus pandemic, provides \$350 billion directly to state and local governments.

Rogers said the town hasn't been told yet how much money it will get because there are still questions about how the state is going to divvy up the money that's to go to the counties. He said amounts will be posted on the league's website, but they are at least a week away from being announced. Rogers said municipalities expect to get 50% of their allotment either later this month or in June and the rest a year later.

The town's allocation, without the county money figured in, was said to be about \$764,000, according to the league in March.

He said the league gave some examples of how the money can be used, but hasn't yet provided all the regulations. The town manager said highway projects are not eligible for these dollars. He said water and sewer projects could be eligible if those projects are already eligible for funding from available programs. He said the town is currently replacing waterlines in Websterville and ARP funds could be used for that project.

Rogers said one piece of good news he learned from the webinar was that money only needs to be obligated by the end of 2024, meaning the money doesn't have to be spent by then, but the funds would have to be connected to a contract for future work.

He said the league strongly encouraged municipalities to get public input for how the funds should be used. Rogers said municipalities were also encouraged to set up separate funds and bank accounts for these dollars.

"They also stressed 'Be patient.' Because we do have time, don't feel like you need to rush to decide how you are going to use the money. I thought that was good advice. Before we start doing any planning, we really need to know what the possibilities are," Rogers said.

No action was taken by the board Tuesday, but Rogers said the board will need to appoint an authorized representative to receive the funds. Rogers said he doesn't have all the details about what that position would do so he couldn't make a recommendation yet on who would be best for it, be it him or the town treasurer or the finance director.

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