



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

Agenda for the Planning Commission

Meeting held on Thursday, February 24, 2022 ~ 5:30 PM

Virtual Meeting Only

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86361584630?pwd=R0MxRytMWG1nemJDZTZ6WU9KTjR3OT09>

Meeting ID: 863 6158 4630

Passcode: 482262

Phone: 1 (929) 205-6099 US (New York – Long distance rates will 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 from January 27, 2022
 - b. Window signage discussion and possible action
5. New Business
 - a. CVRPC Municipal Plan Check-in meeting – Clare Rock, Senior Planner, CVRPC
 - b. Zoning as it relates to 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.

Barre City Planning Commission

January 27, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Present: David Sichel (Chair), Jackie Calder (Vice Chair), Michael Hellein (Secretary), Amanda Gustin, Thomas Lauzon

Absent: None

Staff: Janet Shatney (Director of Planning, Permitting & Assessing)

Visitors: Becky Wigg

1. Call to Order

5:30pm

2. Adjustments to the Agenda

Sichel added discussion of future meeting format as New Business item C.

3. Public Comment

No public comment.

4. Old business

A. Approve meeting minutes of December 9, 2021

A. Change language to read "Shatney said an application would be denied because the section on window signs does not contain the word door."

B. Remove incomplete sentence "There was some discussion, leading to Shatney"

Motion to approve minutes as modified: Lauzon, second Calder, unanimous vote to approve.

B. Zoning regulations - Signage discussion and action

Hellein stated that he was concerned about the removal of the Figure 3-8 sign table, as it contains the definition of what a temporary sign is. He said communication about existing ordinance is a bigger problem than

the ordinance's content. Lauzon said that it's hard to see a solution to communication that doesn't put more work onto overworked staff.

Gustin and Sichel both recommended not having permitting necessary for temporary signs. Calder suggested putting a definition of temporary signs in the opening of the Temporary Signs section.

Shatney reminded the commission that any decisions tonight are just the beginning of the public hearing process to make changes to the ordinance.

Sichel summed up the consensus of the commission: permits will not be required for temporary signs, and the definition of a temporary sign, present for 180 or fewer days, will be present in the paragraph at 3107.H. Calder asked if the signs section would be going alone through the hearing process, or wait for housing, and Sichel said yes it would move forward alone.

Sichel suggested that we remove the dimensional requirements on the window signage area. Hellein said it would make sense to remove the dimensional requirements if we kept the coverage limit at 20%. Lauzon made a case that 40% would be better for businesses and would still leave most of the window open. Gustin pointed out that clear backgrounds would preserve visibility into storefronts. Hellein came around to Lauzon's coverage recommendation since the ordinance currently includes language ensuring a clear background.

There was discussion about the definition of a clear background. Lauzon suggested removing the clear background language, and Hellein resisted that change.

Motion: Lauzon moved changing coverage limit to 40%, striking B, C, D (Height above ground), and removing the first Miscellaneous items (vinyl letters and clear background), and adding an item under Miscellaneous reading "Window signs must be placed to maintain visibility into storefronts", Sichel second. In favor: Calder, Sichel; opposed: Hellein, Gustin; motion failed. (At the time of meeting, it was presumed the motion passed due to the majority present being in favor, but a majority of all seven seats is necessary to carry.)

Motion: Gustin moved to accept Shatney's changes to the Temporary Signs ordinance, and the definition of a temporary sign, (present for

180 or fewer days, will be present in the paragraph at 3107.H.) and start the hearing process, Calder second. Carried unanimously.

C. Housing Task Force update

Sichel provided an update on the activities of the Housing Task Force, noting that it will be discussed in the future.

D. Keys to Barre – Housing Task Force Plan

The packet includes a plan created by a sub-group of the City Council that will help guide the city's activity in increasing the supply of local housing.

5. New Business

A. CVRPC February 24, 2022 – Municipal Plan Check-in meeting

Representatives from the CVRPC will attend the next Planning Commission meeting. Shatney mentioned that trainings are available from the CVRPC.

B. Next Focus discussion

Sichel noticed that it seems like housing is the next topic for us to focus on. He noted that there are some things that will take a long time, and some things that can happen more quickly. Some short-run items are unit density limits in zoning districts and current parking requirements.

Gustin brought up having a paper streets plan as a long term goal. Hellein mentioned addressing zoning district boundaries considering the context of land use in adjacent municipalities. Sichel noted that there are areas where lot sizes don't conform with the zoning which presents a barrier to development. Lauzon stated that a lot of projects are in the works and development by renovation can make costs about half of new construction. Lauzon asked that the commission address density before parking, with consensus.

Gustin praised the Housing Task Force Plan. Sichel noted that a consultant, and a potentially a grant, may be needed to make a number of the changes to the ordinance. ARPA funding may be available as well.

C. Meeting format discussion

Motion: Gustin moved that starting 2/24 the Planning Commission use Zoom only for meetings, second Lauzon. Carried unanimously

6. Staff Updates

Shatney provided a written update report in the packet.

Shatney noted that the city's application for a Municipal Planning Grant for pedestrian planning was not granted.

Lauzon asked if there was a Plan D for filling the Assessor position. Shatney answered that it's difficult to find someone who knows how to value a property. There are no responses to the current round of positions. Montpelier is also searching for an Assessor and not having success. Shatney and the City Manager are looking into working with Barre Town to share some expertise.

7. Roundtable

Sichel introduced Becky Wigg who may be interested in appointment to the commission. She wondered if regional job training programs could help fill the unfilled positions. Sichel suggested Montpelier and Barre could together afford a more lucrative salary than each alone.

8. Adjourn

7:13pm, **Motion Lauzon, Second Gustin, unanimous vote to adjourn.**

Window Signs discussion for 02-24-22: Markup below is where the Commission ended up on January 27, 2022.

Figure 3- 141: Window Sign

UC-1	UC-2	UC-3	MU-1	MU-2	MU-3	R-16	R-12	R-8	R-4	GB	IN	CON	CIV
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Description		
The window sign type is often professionally painted or applied directly on the inside of the window consisting of individual letters and designs. Window signs offer a high level of craftsmanship and visibility, and are often used for small professional offices.		
Size		
SIGNABLE AREA		
A	Area per shopfront window	20% max <u>40 % maximum</u>
B	Width	5 ft max
C	Height	36 inch max

Location		
D	Height above ground	5 ft min
Window signs must be applied directly to the inside of the glass.		
Miscellaneous		
Applied plastic or vinyl cut letters are strongly discouraged and are prohibited in the DRO district.		
Window signs must have a clear background.		
Window signs must not be illuminated.		
<u>Window signs must be placed to maintain visibility into storefronts.</u>		

Janet Shatney

From: Clare Rock <rock@cvregion.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 11, 2022 3:13 PM
To: Janet Shatney; Janet Shatney
Subject: CVRPC meeting with Barre City PC?

Hello Janet,

I'm hoping I could attend an upcoming Barre City PC meeting to do one of our standard consultations. As you may be aware CVRPC is obligated to visit all PC every few years to check in, share CVRPC services, learn about local efforts and hear about any local training needs. Plus if there is any information I can bring to the PC I am happy to do so.

Would it possible to have 15 minutes on one of your upcoming PC meetings agendas?

Thanks!

Clare

Clare Rock
Senior Planner, CFM

CVRPC employees are working remotely, and our offices are closed to visitors. Please call or email, and we will respond as soon as possible. Thank you.



Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

Staff Updates between January 28, 2022 and February 24, 2022:

1. Masks continue to be required to enter any city building.
2. The Assessing Clerk processed 29 PTTR's (Property Transfer Tax Returns) for the month of January 2022 (see <https://www.barrecity.org/assessment.html> for the most updated Property Sales Reports for FY22).
3. There have been no development applications for the Development Review Board.
4. Permitting is very slow at this point, although the number of emails, phone calls and walk-in traffic regarding potential development (people thinking of warmer weather and projects) has significantly ramped up. Much of my time is spent assisting individuals with their questions.
5. The Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation officially awarded on February 21, 2022, to the City \$50,600 in response to the ERSA (Enhancement of Recreation Stewardship and Access) Trail Grant application for property purchase and trail improvements, on behalf of the Cow Pasture Committee. The grant will be finalized and details made known in mid-March.
6. There continues to be no responses to date on the Assessor solicitation that has been out in the public for over a year.
7. There continues to be no responses to date for a permit administrator – I hope to work with the City's HR Director to resend advertising to keep that moving as well.
8. Finished assisting Code Enforcement with a Vacant Building database in their software and creating a separate inspection form for vacant buildings. Now when asked, I can print a list for anyone who requests such, and does not need to forward that request to Code enforcement. Before, I could not assist anyone with a most up to date list, and this has helped them immensely.
9. I participated in a 2-day webinar last week regarding Current Use as it applies to assessing, which was most helpful as the City continues to look at potentially purchasing property out on Allen Street to construct a new DPW garage, and might include co-locating a household hazardous waste drop off center for the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District and the Green Mountain Transit offices and bus depot.
10. Cannabis and the State Cannabis Control Board are seeking information regarding our zoning to be sure we are already in compliance with their draft new rules, of which I need to look at this week and get back to them on.

11. Downstreet Housing is going to be completing their renovations to the Bromur St. Apartments this year, to include new sidewalks, landscaping, and a clear definition of their parking areas as it relates to the actual street.
12. Downstreet Housing completed the purchase and sale of 31 Keith Avenue (former apartment building and hair salon) and has started discussions with the city for placement of job trailers and materials for the renovations to become the Recovery Residence they received \$300,000 in grant funds for last year.
13. Turning Point Center was awarded \$200,000 of the asking \$300,000 towards their project on S. Main Street. They are applying to the US Rural Dept. of Agriculture for the outstanding amount to realize their desire to move the existing facility from the North End to the new location on S. Main.
14. In meeting with the Executive Director to Barre Area Development every two weeks, we keep each other apprised of store vacancies, potential development, those who are looking at the City to relocate, etc. The former L&M Diner has received some attention in the last two weeks, and we are in hopes that someone desires to re-open it in a diner fashion. Other interests include warehouse space for a new business coming to Barre City in the Wall Street Complex.
15. I am starting to see more requests for reassessment as we get closer to April 1. I have 5 letters to date to address this spring regarding someone's appeal of their assessment.
16. With so many people working remotely now, the amount of file reviews via email are many. In the past, a title researcher would come to the office, and review the files we have for anything they are looking for. Now, with remote capabilities, those folks are requesting file reviews electronically, and that means scanning contents of the various permitting files and sending them off.
17. As primary staff to the Energy Committee, we met Saturday to go through a plan that the consultant created as a 5-year workbook of items they can do going forward.
18. There are a number of compliance questions I am amassing that I hope to work in to my schedule after the first of March. Those include emergency lighting at the school, an illegally placed enclosure which I hope to get a picture of so I can write them a compliance letter; I had hoped to have an answer on the Decision that was erroneously written regarding someone's window signs with the city attorney, but we have had to reschedule multiple times – I hope to finish this up shortly after the first March as well, so I can go into mid-March with no lagging concerns that haven't been addressed as yet.
19. All the permit forms need updating due to fees and date/name updates – I hope to complete in the next two weeks.

20. The assessing software the city uses to “talk” with the State Tax Dept. will no longer be used by the end of this year. We have been learning and starting to use the new grand list software called VTPIE (Vermont Property Information Exchange) in both our office as well as the Clerk’s for what they use it for.
21. I presented the Manager with a final draft of the Reappraisal Contractor’s contract with all changes incorporated so that it can get approved by Council.
22. The new Police Chief, Braedon Vail was chosen and accepted the job, and will be presented to Council Tuesday, Feb. 22.