



City of Barre, Vermont

November 9, 2023, 5:30 PM

Regular Meeting of the Barre City Planning Commission

Venue Options: **Remote or in-person**

Zoom:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89301594299?pwd=MXkyVmV6VnVhUC9Obk1GaVhNMFFKUT09>

Meeting ID: 893 0159 4299 Passcode: 815236

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

Agenda

1. Call to order - 5:30 PM
2. Adjustments to the Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes
 - a. October 12, 2023 regular meeting
 - b. October 26, 2023 special meeting
4. Public comment (for something not on the agenda)
5. Old Business
 - a. Interim Zoning Changes discussion
 - b. Site Visit Follow-up Discussion
6. New Business
 - a. Commercial-to-Residential Conversion: Housing Supply Action Plan
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/cea/written-materials/2023/10/27/commercial-to-residential-conversion-addressing-office-vacancies/>
6. Confirm date of next meeting – December 14, 2023
7. Staff updates – as needed
8. Roundtable
9. Adjourn

Barre City Planning Commission

October 12, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Present: David Sichel (Chair), Becky Wigg (Vice Chair), Rosemary Averill, Caitlin Corkins, Raylene Meunier

Absent: Joe Reil (Secretary)

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

Visitors: Representative Peter Anthony, Mayor Jake Hemmerick

1. Call to Order.

5:30pm.

2. Adjustments to the Agenda.

Averill suggests taking the upcoming Flood Recovery discussion (on October 18) into account during the Interim Zoning Changes discussion..

3. Approval of Minutes.

a. September 14, 2023.

Corkins moves to approve (noting that her name has been misspelled as 'Corkin' previously), Averill seconds, unanimous in favor.

4. Public comment (for something not on the agenda).

Rep. Peter Anthony wants to urge the Planning Commission to reduce required parking spaces per residential unit, as we are in a rebuilding stage. Also urges the Commission to suggest to Council to revisit Winter Parking regulations, especially in light of new leadership at the Department of Public Works.

Mayor Hemmerick asks for an update on the Bylaw Modernization and RAISE Grants and notes that agenda item 5a should refer to the North Main Street to Summer Street Plan. Sichel notes that the No. Main St. to Summer St. plan is on the agenda and will be discussed later, that the Bylaw Modernization RFP did not receive a response and Shatney is pursuing it further.

There was additional discussion around the RAISE grant, \$100,000 for transit oriented development and planning, which could overlap with the No Main St. to Summer St. Plan. This is a Federal Grant, administered by Chittenden County

Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC), and Barre was selected as a recipient of those funds.

Shatney indicates we had not heard about that grant and will look into it further.

Additional discussion around parking, Mayor Hemmerick echoes Rep. Anthony's comments. Shatney indicates an upcoming internal parking team meeting on Monday, October 16, and she can bring these comments and concerns from this meeting to them.

5. Old Business.

- a. Planning Grant Consultant Proposal Discussion for North Main Street to Summer Street Plan.

Discussion about proposal, whether we should accept it, and feedback from the Subcommittee. Wigg indicates the Subcommittee reviewed it independently and agree that it was a good proposal.

Sichel notes that we should ensure the Planning Commission, as well as the Community at large are involved and that it will be on the City and the Commission to encourage community involvement. Averill wants to make sure Council is involved as early as possible to avoid miscommunications.

Sichel notes an email comment from Reil (who is absent), about the timeline as we are already a little behind their proposed timelines.

Wigg moves to recommend acceptance and to move forward with this contract, Meunier seconds, all in favor.

- b. Site Visit(s) Discussion.

Discussion around possible site visit, to review the existing plan, and compare it with the area as it stands now, and possibly including VHB (the Consulting Firm).

There is general support for a site visit, discussion around a good date and time. Sichel suggests Thursday, October 26, at 4pm. There is consensus that this is a good time. Further discussion about inviting City Council and the Consultants. Mayor Hemmerick says an invitation would be welcome, though everyone may not be available.

6. New Business.

- a. Interim Zoning Changes Discussion.

Sichel suggests that Interim Zoning changes would be worth looking at, both because our Bylaw Modernization plan has been delayed and due to the housing crisis caused by the flooding, and that scheduling a working session with City Council may be appropriate.

Suggestions included parking (as previously discussed), density requirements, taking into account upcoming State statute changes, extending the design review district to more areas (possibly slowing down demolition of existing structures), minimum lot size (and width), senior housing (safety and availability).

Mayor Hemmerick suggests there are some legitimate concerns from Council with reducing parking too much, and these should be considered. Also brings up recent loss of buildings in the area and that demolition needs to be carefully managed.

Shatney mentions that she has a list of examples where zoning districts have restricted development and that she can compile these for our review to take into account for possible changes. Sichel adds that we may consider changing our zoning to match the upcoming changes in the upcoming State statute changes to get ahead of them.

Wigg asks if there is any discretion to allow for singular exemptions while we work on this. Sichel notes that the Interim Zoning Changes are that process as the City officials are legally bound to act according to the

Further discussion around how a coordinated meeting with Council would work. Mayor Hemmerick suggests it might be better to have Council attend a regular Planning Commission meeting and we may temporarily increase our meeting frequency. Shatney will coordinate with the City Manager to set this up.

7. Confirm Date of Next Meeting.

- a. November, 9, 2023.

8. Staff Updates.

Discussion of several current development projects that are in progress, including residential development.

A glossary of related terms is now available on the Planning Commission site on the City webpage.

Barre City's hazard mitigation plan expired last year, an updated plan is now in progress with Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission.

A previous hazard mitigation project, increasing the size of storm drains on Granite Street, has now received its final requisition.

9. Round Table.

Rosemary mentions the Infrastructure and Planning discussion at the upcoming Flood Recovery discussion on Wednesday, October 18, and asks for feedback of

discussion points to be sure we're all on the same page. Sichel has general suggestions, that it is important to be resilient when we rebuild, to take future crises into account.

10. Adjourn.

6:42pm, **Averill moves to adjourn, Corkins seconds, unanimous in favor.**

Barre City Planning Commission

October 26, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes

Present: David Sichel (Chair), Becky Wigg (Vice Chair), Joe Reil (Secretary), Rosemary Averill, Raylene Meunier

Absent: Caitlin Corkins

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

Visitors: Mike Willard and Jeff Dube from vhb; City Councilor Michael Boutin, Mayor Jake Hemmerick

1. Call to Order.

4:00pm.

2. N Main to Summer St Plan: Site visit (proceed from City Hall).

Walked through area covered by North Main to Summer Street plan to review.
Discussed changes that have occurred in the area since the original plan was written and possible updates for revision.

3. Adjourn.

5:05pm.

Staff Updates – Week ending November 3, 2023

- The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission has been chosen from all the applicants to complete the update to our Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- There were no applications for the November Development Review Board meeting, but there are potentially up to 3 applicants for time in front of them for December.
- The DRB had 2 resignations recently, leaving 3 openings on that Board. One has been filled in September, with moving an at-large participant to a Ward position, so that the at-large positions would be easier to fill. At one of the upcoming City Council meetings, another applicant for one of the two remaining openings will be heard for potential appointment, thereby leaving only 1 remaining seat open.
- Renovations to the former police department area in City Hall were completed at the beginning of October and Barre Up! Hub will reside in that space.
- Staff is now back in the renovated PPA offices with minor items left to correct, and the doorway from the Annex area (former PD space) into our office still remains to be done.
- Permitting continues for flood damaged, and for landslide damaged homes.