

Barre City Planning Commission

January 23, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Present: David Sichel (Chair), Joe Reil (Secretary), Rosemary Averill, Caitlin Corkins, Wendy Ducey, Raylene Meunier*

*Joined meeting during discussion of Item 6A.

Absent: Becky Wigg (Vice Chair)

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

Visitors: Ed Stanak and Jeremy Spiro-Winn, Barre City Residents

1. Call to Order.

5:30pm.

2. Adjustments to the Agenda.

None.

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

None.

4. Approval of Minutes.

a. December 12, 2024.

Reil suggested an edit to fix an incorrect section notation.

Averill moved to approve with edit, Corkins seconded, unanimous in favor.

5. Old Business.

a. Encore Renewable Energy Battery Storage Discussion and possible Letter of Recommendation

Shatney drafted a letter and presented it for review with some proposed edits already in place. There was a suggestion that we take into account that the site neighbors were notified and had no concerns and consensus was to include this in the letter.

Reil moved to submit to City Council with proposed edits, Ducey seconded, unanimous in favor.

- b. Unified Development Ordinance Revisions: Downtown Housing on ground floor

A proposal to consider adjusting ordinance for ground floor housing in the UC-1 district was discussed. Some specific examples were considered, as well as concerns about ensuring this is Main Street frontage only. Consensus was generally supportive with going ahead with this requiring a Conditional Use permit.

Corkins moved to have Shatney draft the discussed changes and to hold a public hearing during the February meeting, Ducey seconded, unanimous in favor.

6. New Business.

- a. Chapter 23 Vacant Building Ordinance Discussion

Discussion was prompted by the recent Council decision regarding the building at 134 North Main Street. Existing ordinance was reviewed and discussed, noting that this may not be completely within the Planning Commission's purview. State law needs to be considered as well as inviting input and participation from other stakeholders, including the Fire Department, City Council, and the City's Lawyers.

Ed Stanak spoke to say that he feels the existing ordinance is already well structured but needs to be beefed up to be more enforceable and more gradually enforced and suggested comparing with what other Cities/States are doing, also wants to encourage discussion on the State regulations by the Legislature and would like to take part in future discussions.

Jeremy Spiro-Winn spoke in support of revising the ordinance and had some suggested changes, Sichel suggested Spiro-Winn submit his proposed changes in writing.

Shatney will review the statute with the City Manager and provide a suggestion for how to proceed in a future meeting.

7. Confirm Date of Next Meeting.

- a. February 27, 2025.

8. Staff Updates.

Assessors are out reviewing properties with an aim to be completed in time for the April tax deadline.

Flood-related buyouts and Elevation money discussions are in progress.

9. Round Table.

Sichel had a question about whether any additional grants were being pursued and Shatney indicated that was not happening at this time.

Ducey had a question about whether the restrictions on food service drive-through in the Unified Development Ordinance and whether an exception means this needs to be revised. Shatney indicated that the regulations apply to a new building or construction and existing exceptions are known as non-conforming.

10. Adjourn.

6:52 pm, **Ducey moved to adjourn, Reil seconded, unanimous in favor.**