

DRAFT
Pittsford Planning Commission Meeting
October 24, 2024

Board Members Present: Rick Conway, Kevin Blow, Donna Wilson, Mark Pape, Robb Spensley, Mike Norris

Others Present: Jeff Biasuzzi, Mark Winslow

1. Meeting - Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:01PM by Kevin Blow – Chair.

2. Approval of Meeting Agenda

A motion was made by Robb Spensley and seconded by Donna Wilson to approve the agenda. **The motion passed unanimously.**

3. Approval of Minutes

. September 26, 2024 Planning Commission

A motion was made by Mark Pape and seconded by Mike Norris to approve the September 26, 2024 Planning Commission meeting minutes with one abstention – Robb Spensley. **The motion passed.**

4. Public Comment

Mark Winslow asked the status of the enhanced energy plan. Rick Conway advised that the Planning Commission had reviewed Brandon's plan at request of Jeremy Gildrien, however, Mr. Gildrien has since provided a draft plan for the Planning Commission to consider. At a prior meeting, the Commission had begun the review of the draft through the first four pages but to date no actions have been determined relating to the policies. Mr. Gildrien had advised that all of the policies noted in the draft have to meet the energy plan standards and actions are up to the Town to decide upon. Potential actions have been included in the draft and one action per policy is required, however the Planning Commission may choose to create their own. Once the Planning Commission has reviewed the plan and provides actions and comments to Mr. Gildrien, he will create the draft for the Commission's consideration. It was noted that Mr. Spensley had created an introduction based on Brandon's plan that is to replace the introduction in the draft document. Mr. Conway noted the Planning Commission's charge is to create and approve an energy plan to submit to the Select Board for their approval. Mr. Winslow asked if Mr. Gildrien is now the person that the Planning Commission should be working with. It was noted that Logan Solomon of the RRPC is working with the Commission regarding the town plan and Mr. Gildrien is the RRPC energy person that they are to work with in developing the Town's energy plan. Mr. Winslow stated the work that the Committee previously completed from the Brandon plan was extremely well done but noted that the Select Board would likely not approve the new draft plan. Donna Wilson advised there has been discussion at the RRPC that some of these regulations are not going to happen and it has been suggested an invitation be extended to the legislators to meet with the RRPC group. Rick Conway stated there are goals and policies in the town plan.

5. Old Business

. Review Draft Enhanced Energy Plan from Jeremy Gildrien of the RRPC

The Planning Commission reviewed all policies outlined in the draft and decided upon the following actions associated with each policy. Mr. Conway reiterated that Mr. Gildrien had indicated all policies need to be in the plan with a minimum of one action per policy.

Universal Policies:

- a) Policy: Distribute the benefits of this plan equitably (distributional equity)
- i. Action: Install public EVSE near underserved community members.

Remainder of proposed actions to be removed. It was noted that the Town Manager has been able to get funding for a charger at the Village Farm.

- b) Policy: Conduct equitable outreach about this plan (procedural equity)
- i. Action: Use a variety of outreach methods to seek public input on the plan.

Remainder of proposed actions to be removed.

- c) Policy: Understand how to help residents implement this plan (structural equity)
- i. Action: Provide resources and suggestions through the town newsletter and website.

Remainder of proposed actions to be removed.

- d) Policy: Evaluate the equity impacts of this plan (Corrective equity)
- i. Action: Determine inclusive outreach methods.

Remainder of proposed actions to be removed.

- a) Policy: Prioritize development in compact mixed-use centers to reduce sprawl
- i. Action: Update the Land Use Ordinance to conform with development goals and priorities. Bring them into compliance with the Vermont HOMES Act of 2023.

Remainder of proposed actions to be removed.

- b) Policy: Demonstrate Municipal leadership by adopting all efficiency and fuel switching actions in this plan for municipally owned infrastructure
- i. Action: Participate in the MERP Program through building energy assessments and fund implementation of assessment recommendations for all town buildings.
- ii. Action: Implement weatherization activities at the town police station, town hall, fire/water district and the wastewater treatment plant.
- iii. Action: Investigate the purchase of EVs for Municipal and Police Departments (Mark Winslow noted that the Town could consider converting to a hybrid model)
- iv. Action: Convert town lawncare equipment to battery-operated as soon as feasible.

Remainder of proposed actions to be removed.

Thermal Policies:

- a) Policy: Help residents reduce energy consumption
- i. Action: Apply for grants to provide incentives for residents to weatherize, adopt renewables and install heat pumps.
- ii. Action: Coordinate and conduct an annual public outreach campaign including 1 training, 1 educational mailing and 2 articles in local media outlets to encourage conservation of resources.
- iii. Action: Encourage advanced woodburning devices like woodstoves and pellet stoves.

- b) Policy: Provide outreach and education about energy conservation
- i. Action: Engage BROC and Efficiency Vermont to facilitate public education and outreach.

Remainder of proposed actions to be removed.

- c) Policy: Increase building efficiency, climate resilience and safety

i. Action: Engage BROC and Efficiency Vermont to assist in these efforts.

Remainder of proposed actions to be removed.

d) Policy: Determine current weatherization and energy efficiency in town

i. Action: Survey residents and businesses to determine the number and type of HVAC systems.

Remainder of proposed actions to be removed.

e) Policy: Decrease the use of fossil fuel for heating and cooling

i. Action: Host 1 annual workshop on heat pumps, networked heating and cooling, and renewable technologies

Transportation Policies:

a) Policy: Decrease single occupancy vehicle trips through Public Transportation, walking and biking

i. Action: Provide public outreach and education on Public Transportation through the Middlebury Connector, walking, and biking.

ii. Action: Work with Go! Vermont to provide 1 annual public presentation about Public Transportation and Ridesharing.

iii. Action: Coordinate with Marble Valley Transit to market the BUS and commuting on public transit

iv. Action Provide information about public transportation and ridesharing at Pittsford Days, Town Office, and MacClure Library

Remainder of proposed actions to be removed.

Mark Winslow suggested inquiring whether the wording can be modified. Rick Conway will clarify with Jeremy Gildrien whether the policy language can be modified from the draft.

b) Policy: Develop public transit and shared transportation networks

i. Action: Coordinate with Marble Valley Transit to bring service to town.

ii. Action: Connect public transit bus stops to sidewalk network.

Remainder of proposed actions to be removed.

c) Policy: Maintain existing and develop new walking and biking infrastructure

i. Action: Prepare a long-term plan to enhance walkability to the downtown center with a focus on safe walking and biking paths to schools, by 2026.

Remainder of proposed actions to be removed.

It was noted the way the Town is shaped, creating new trails would not be beneficial and the fastest way around would be sidewalks.

d) Policy: Provide opportunities to fuel switching from fossil fuels to sustainable alternatives

i. Action: Support the School for a replacement of Drivers Ed car with an all-electric model.

ii. Action: Install EVSE in town.

Remainder of proposed actions to be removed.

Electric Policies:

a) Policy: Provide renewable generation siting guidance

i. Action: Provide link to RRPC and GMP renewable siting maps

Remainder of proposed actions to be removed.

b) Policy: Screening policy

i. Action: Develop screening bylaws or ordinance

c) Policy: Natural gas pipeline conformance plan

i. Action: Support future plan for natural gas

d) Policy: Maximize the potential for renewable generation on preferred location

i. Action: Utilize Town's current solar checklist.

Remainder of proposed actions to be removed.

Mike Norris stated that preferred siting is inspired by GMP as they have substations that are saturated and they have the approval rights. Mr. Norris asked in what other sector does the Town have a plan of where the preferred actions can be. The Town should not dictate where the solar can be and Mr. Norris suggested looking at projects on a case-by-case basis rather than determining specific sites. By having a preferred siting map means some people can make money while others cannot. It was noted if there is a map specifying preferred locations, a large developer can then just choose from those locations if they want a letter of support. Rick Conway advised a solar checklist was developed and he will provide a copy of the document as the Commission needs to be aware of those criteria. Mark Winslow suggested large projects should go in the industrial areas but would depend on the size of a project. Mr. Conway questioned solar projects that are visible and screened and what the size classifications are. Mr. Norris advised if a project is larger than 15KW it would go through the PUC. If it is 15KW on the ground, it is considered small commercial or residential. A 16KW to 500 KW project on the ground would require a full permitting process with PUC approval. Larger than 500KW is a major process and would be considered industrial and takes years to obtain. Mr. Conway stated people that own large tracks of land may want to consider solar if it is a good location. Mr. Norris stated this should be conditional use on a case-by-case basis. If it is multiple acres and is encapsulated with woodlands, he does not see why the property owner could not do this. Mr. Winslow stated the reason for the enhanced energy plan is to have substantial deference when projects come before the Select Board and Planning Commission. It was noted that RRPC has solar maps and it was not thought the Town needed additional maps. Mr. Winslow reiterated the Select Board would like projects to be placed in commercial areas and suggested leaving out a map as the Town has met its solar requirements. Mr. Winslow noted the State has outlined that they do not want projects placed on prime ag farmland.

Robb Spensley asked about the analysis and targets that are outlined with each of the policy groups. Mr. Winslow suggested the document should be simplified with possibly the addition of some of Brandon's verbiage, rather than what is noted in the draft. Rick Conway advised that the proposed actions and changes to the draft will be forwarded to Jeremy Gildrien for an updated version to be considered. Mr. Conway suggested Mr. Norris provide his solar document for review at the next meeting.

Jeff Biasuzzi noted Brandon has had its enhanced energy planning in effect for 3+ years and they have not had to use substantial deference to this point.

6. New Business

Rick Conway requested Mr. Biasuzzi run zoom during the first three months of next year. Mr. Biasuzzi advised if he is not available, someone will be available to run it.

Jeff Biasuzzi attended the VLCT zoning forum last week. The first part was dedicated to an explanation of Act 47 and Act 68. The second part of the meeting was the biography of the Pawlet military issue. The end result is that the State passed a law against this type of training facility in the State.

On Friday, November 1st, the State's Local Municipal Day is scheduled and there will be 29 separate workshops. If any committee member wants to attend, the Town will pay the registration fee and mileage. Members can log into the VLCT website to register and the invoice will be sent to the Town.

Rick Conway suggested reading the headings of all the policies in the draft energy plan prior to the next meeting and suggested Mr. Spensley's introduction be used. Mr. Conway stated it is hoped that Mr. Gildrien will create a new draft plan that could be discussed at the January meeting. Mr. Biasuzzi advised that once a draft is approved, a public hearing will need to be held and if there are no changes or minor amendments, it can then be submitted to the Select Board for approval. This is an amendment to the Town Plan and would have the same approval process timeline. Kevin Blow stated this plan needs to be approved first, followed by an update to the zoning regulations. Mr. Biasuzzi stated there is a two-year window for Act 68. Mr. Biasuzzi noted there is a property that wants to put in 9 to 24 units in a building but there is a contradiction with the current zoning rules.

7. Next Meeting

January 23, 2025 @ 7:00PM at the Pittsford Town Office

8. Adjournment

A motion was made by Mark Pape and seconded by Robb Spensley to adjourn the meeting at 9:01PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary

Approved by,

The Pittsford Planning Commission