

DRAFT
Pittsford Planning Commission Meeting
February 27, 2025

Board Members Present: Rick Conway, Kevin Blow, Donna Wilson, Mark Pape, Robb Spensley, Chuck Charbonneau

Others Present: Jeff Biasuzzi, Ann Reed

Others Present via Zoom: Jeremy Gildrien, Kelly Lyon

1. Meeting - Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:02PM by Kevin Blow – Chair.

2. Approval of Meeting Agenda

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

3. Approval of Minutes

. January 23, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting

A motion was made by Chuck Charbonneau and seconded by Robb Spensley to approve the January 23, 2025 Planning Commission meeting minutes, as amended. **The motion passed unanimously.**

A correction under Item 6 to replace the Town Manager with Assistant to the Town Manager.

4. Public Comment

There was no discussion held.

5. Mandatory Ethics Training with Ann Reed

Ann Reed advised the State legislature has new requirements for ethics training. The Town had to enact a code of ethics and enforcement that positions mandatorily have to do. There is training and questions that can be done online. Ms. Reed provided the training link to the Committee that is also on the Town's website under News and Notices. She also noted that she can set up members on the Town Manager's laptop to complete the training that is through the Secretary of State's office. The training is mandatory to stay on the Planning Commission. Ms. Reed advised the Committee if one has an ethics complaint and is against anyone but Ms. Reed, it will go directly to her, however, if the complaint is against Ms. Reed it would go to Dan Adams of the Select Board. The Town is following state statute and the VLCT guidelines. Ms. Reed stated there have been some unethical things that have happened in other Vermont towns, which is the reason they are requiring the training be mandatory for all towns and it will be a way to hold people accountable for unethical actions. Chuck Charbonneau asked if there is a process for complaints to be filed with the State. Ms. Reed advised a complaint is sent to the State's Ethics Panel and they provide the Town information whether it is a valid complaint. Ms. Reed advised the training has to be completed within 120 days, which is a 43-minute video followed by the questions. It was suggested to include this item on the Planning Commission's subsequent agendas as a reminder for anyone who has not completed it.

6. Old Business

. Energy Plan with Jeremy Gildrien of the RRPC

Kevin Blow advised a draft enhanced energy plan was provided by Jeremy Gildrien of the RRPC for consideration. Mr. Gildrien advised the draft is an edited version based on a meeting with Robb Spensley. Mr. Spensley thanked Mr. Gildrien for meeting with the Commission and providing an updated draft for the Commission's consideration. Following is a page-by-page review of the draft:

Page 1 - There were no changes to the table of contents.

Page 2 – Rick Conway stated Figure 1 is very hard to see and suggested the page numbers be placed in the center at the bottom of the page. Robb Spensley noted the comments section on the side of the pages will be removed and that will make the document more legible. Mr. Gildrien noted the page numbers will be changed as requested.

Page 3 – Kevin Blow stated under Due Consideration; the word “evincing” could be a word that people may not be familiar with. Mr. Gildrien stated this is a direct quote from the State that could not be changed.

Page 4 – Kevin Blow noted that from a previous version to this version, the figures for thermal spending and transportation spending in the graphic under Pittsford's Energy Burden were switched. Mr. Gildrien advised the figures were highlighted in the first document because he needed to double-check the most recent data and the numbers have been confirmed and are the most up to date data, which is the reason for the switch. Rick Conway stated the average energy burden is 12.2 and the original was 10.6 and asked the reason for the change. Mr. Gildrien stated it is due to the updated data. Mr. Conway asked if Pittsford's BTUs includes Omya and Mr. Gildrien confirmed it does include Omya. Mr. Gildrien advised it is a state standard and this number is from model data that is from the LEAP model and includes energy of all kinds. On Page 7 it breaks down where each comes from. Chuck Charbonneau stated Pittsford is on path for more energy systems and questioned this section. Mr. Gildrien stated this is the introduction that Robb Spensley had written.

Page 5 – Rick Conway stated there was a discussion about the first paragraph and sees Mr. Gildrien's comment from VT Digger. He does not think it belongs in the document as he does not know what proof or evidence there is. Donna Wilson stated this has to be in the document. Mr. Gildrien stated there needs to be a Standard 13 regarding equity impact and this is satisfying the equity impact analysis. If the Planning Commission would like to provide a different way to indicate it, he can make the change. Mr. Gildrien noted Vermont gets the largest single source of electricity from the dams of Hydro-Quebec. Mr. Conway did not think there is any evidence to support the claim of inequity and this is a big disadvantage with a monopoly servicing the State. He also noted that changes with tariffs could affect our electricity and he is concerned with going more towards electrical and using a foreign country for electricity, as there could be an issue. He suggested there needs to be more electricity being produced in this country and not going to a monopoly in another country. Mr. Gildrien stated part of the takeaway of the equity analysis is by increasing local production and later in the Energy Generation section it says producing our own electricity will avoid these kinds of inequities. All agreed the current paragraph will remain in the document.

Page 6 – Jeremy Gildrien advised the regional plan that this is modeled on does not have this section and questioned if the Planning Commission wanted to leave it in their Plan. The Commission was in agreement to leave it out. Kevin Blow stated in the 2nd paragraph, Pittsford has very good air quality so why are we doing this if the air quality is good. Mr. Gildrien stated part of the regulatory capacity is energy siting. If someone wanted to put in a coal powered plant in Pittsford, if you want to maintain high quality air, there can be standards included in this section. Robb Spensley stated the Town can always elect to challenge a project and this provides the teeth with standards to challenge. In the second paragraph, Greenhouse Gas Issue, Mr. Conway stated there was an extensive discussion about natural gas where many areas are using it. This is the cheapest way to heat and asked why Rutland doesn't have it. It makes no sense when natural gas is 2.5 times cleaner than burning wood and Mr. Conway questioned why this area is not going to use natural gas.

Page 7 – Rick Conway stated this is the BTUs issue when talking about cars, heat, etc. and confirmed there would be a graphic on the page to show what it is trying to illustrate as it is important that people understand it and that it makes sense. Mr. Conway noted there is a reference on Page 8 for the electrical analysis and one has to refer to Figure 3 on Page 7. Mr. Gildrien noted all of the analysis takes up more than one page and could duplicate the graphic, but there is more information. It was the consensus to leave the page as is.

Page 8 – Rick Conway stated the draft indicates 8% of electricity is used by residential customers and 94% by businesses and noted that in the previous document it was the opposite. Jeremy Gildrien stated the numbers have to be in there and the numbers in this version are accurate. Ann Reed stated the current figures would make sense with all of the businesses and Omya. Mr. Gildrien noted all of the numbers have been fact-checked. Kevin Blow questioned the statement that GMP provides 100% carbon-free power and Mr. Gildrien noted that is what GMP claims. Because they are a regulated monopoly, they are reviewed by the Public Utility Commission and they have in-depth documents of where those claims come from.

Page 9 – There were no changes noted.

Page 10 – There were no changes noted.

Page 11 – Kevin Blow stated in the last paragraph, the electric supply from GMP is 100% carbon free and asked if they are getting renewable power now. Mr. Gildrien noted they are, but not 100%.

Page 12 – There were no changes noted.

Page 13 – Rick Conway stated statistics on driving are not an accurate representation and advised he went to a corporate average fuel economy site for information. Mr. Conway cited an example of inaccuracies and suggested the figures need to be updated. Jeremy Gildrien advised these are State averages and are not specific to one area and he averaged the fuel prices over the last year. Donna Wilson noted there is a big difference between the new and older cars. Robb Spensley suggested talking to Mark Winslow as it is the Select Board that will take this draft forward to the next step. It was noted that the Planning Commission's comments can be provided to the Select Board for their consideration. Ann Reed suggested placing an asterisk and indicating it is over a year period. She also suggested not getting held up on small details as this is a snapshot in time. Mr. Conway stated one other point on EVs is that the average is on a controlled temperature as there is a lot of difference when it is very hot or very cold. He stated it needs to be a level playing field and it is very difficult to extinguish fires that are involved with EVs. It is important not to misrepresent to the average person reading the document. Mark Pape agreed with Mr. Conway as he does not think an electric vehicle is much better mileage than hybrids and the comparison needs to be apples to apples and this chart does not represent the current mileage. Mr. Gildrien stated this could be taken out and all members were in agreement with removing it. Mr. Gildrien stated RRPC is not mandating what is in the document. Mr. Spensley noted the Select Board has indicated they want an enhanced energy plan. Mr. Gildrien advised the State has standards for regional and municipal energy plans and when the RRPC has an enhanced energy plan they have to approve municipal plans that are based on meeting the State's standards. There is a checklist and there are things that have to stay in the Plan because it is in the state standards for meeting the enhanced energy plan criteria. Mr. Gildrien noted he is trying to help the Planning Commission figure out meeting the standards and following the checklist for the State. It was agreed that this graphic be taken out. Mr. Gildrien noted this information is based on the LEAP model that the RRPC has received and this is Pittsford's portion of the regional amount. It was noted there is a significant price difference between gas-powered and electric vehicles.

Page 14 – Kevin Blow questioned the graph showing less energy by 2050 and Mr. Gildrien noted this is the goal for less energy overall. Mr. Blow stated there is data regarding the consumption of renewable energy Pittsford needs and asked where the renewal energy will come from. Rick Conway stated it can be solar, wind, bio, and hydro. Mr. Gildrien advised there is a graphic on Page 15 and it was noted that it is solar, wind and hydro. Mr. Gildrien reported Pittsford has already met the target. Chuck Charbonneau asked if the data is actually installed solar fields or from solar fields that have been approved but not installed. Mr. Gildrien confirmed this is installed capacity and will be higher if others are completed. There is a paragraph that indicates the Town has already met its goal. Mr. Gildrien advised this also does not include all of the smaller rooftop projects. He stated since the Town is already over the number, further details are not needed. Mr. Conway stated under the electrical targets the big buzz thing is AI and power is needed and asked if things are being done to upgrade the grid and will they be able to harden the grids. Mr. Gildrien stated that it is not within the Town's capacity to address as they cannot regulate or have a say in the distribution grid. Mr. Conway read comments from Forbes and noted concern with the trends as he is concerned with the cost of electricity as the Plan is directing everything in that way. He stated the demand is going to be so high with not enough supply and the cost of electricity is going to be too expensive. Mr. Charbonneau stated with new construction the average service used to be 100 amps but today it is 400amps due to heat pumps and electric cars. In order to have enough power in a house, the cost is 4 times as much from 40 years ago.

Mr. Gildrien asked if there is specific language the Commission would like in the Plan. It was the consensus to leave the current information in the document.

Page 15 – Robb Spensley noted a typo in the highlighted paragraph to change in to is. Mr. Spensley would also like to work with Rick Conway to incorporate the points that he made in the previous page. Rick Conway asked when the RRPC did a survey. Mr. Gildrien reported they did the survey in the fall of 2024. Donna Wilson stated she did attend some of the meetings where they put their ideas together and collated the results. Mr. Conway noted the survey results show the most interest is in heat pumps and solar and questioned if the results are for the entire region or Pittsford's results. Ms. Wilson stated the results were people who were surveyed in Rutland County. Mr. Conway noted industrial wind is not going to be endorsed by Pittsford and he is concerned with the wind comments. Mr. Gildrien advised this can be removed from the document and all members were in agreement with removing it. Ms. Wilson stated it could be added that there is a broad outreach program. Mr. Gildrien advised he can change it to region, not county, as it does not include Pittsfield.

Page 16 – Rick Conway asked what the section is trying to show as Pittsford does not support wind. Jeremy Gildrien stated it references residential, commercial, and utility scales and is not promoting anything but is just data points. He stated it will come up later in the electric policies as it references scales of development, but he can remove it if the Commission would prefer. Robb Spensley stated it seems like some sort of endorsement to have it in the policy. Mr. Gildrien noted in the renewable section, the Town has met the targets and this was just for perspective. It was suggested to remove the information and all were in agreement.

Page 17 – There were no changes made.

Page 18 – Jeremy Gildrien stated this was the result of a conversation with Robb Spensley. There are policies and actions that serve different functions. The actions can be adopted or changed. Mr. Gildrien put down every action that any town may have used as food for thought. When Mr. Spensley and he reviewed it, he crossed out the ones that he thought the Planning Commission would not want. The actions need to be decided. There is less flexibility in the policies. One policy added that was not in the standards is an energy siting policy. Robb Spensley stated when meeting with Mr. Gildrien, they referenced the prior discussion of the Planning Commission. The actions need to be agreed upon but the policies need to stay to have substantial deference. Mr. Gildrien stated he brought in the language from the standards and the Commission can go through the ones that are of concern. Rick Conway questioned prioritizing mixed-use centers to reduce sprawl. Mr. Gildrien reported that is one of the standards. Mr. Conway stated for the energy siting policy; the Commission would like Mike Norris to weigh in. Mr. Gildrien advised the energy siting policy is not required and can be removed to still have an enhanced energy plan. These are pulled from the PUC 248 review criteria when reviewing a certificate of public good. If intervening at a 248 proceeding it could be in the enhanced energy plan. Mr. Gildrien stated he removed any reference to preferred sites. On page 15 it indicates there is not going to be any preferred designated locations. Mr. Gildrien noted on the maps there will be constrained areas. Mr. Norris will be asked to review the map. Mr. Conway asked if the schools that have pellet boilers and residential biomass (woodstoves) will be considered in conformance. Mr. Gildrien stated in removing this it will take away some protections. It does not require the Planning Commission to take action but in taking it out, there would not be information in the enhanced energy plan during a PUC proceeding. There is not a requirement to intervene, but the information would provide the ability to intervene. Mr. Spensley asked if the plan would be used for certain facilities like OV that would be out of compliance. Mr. Gildrien suggested a change to say new energy siting policy. All were in agreement with the change. Chuck Charbonneau noted with the State and Federal regulations one would have to meet all regulations for new plants. Mr. Spensley stated it would be the Select Board that would have the ability to stop it if it is not a desired plant. Mr. Conway was concerned with people's woodstoves and outside boilers and suggested removing biomass, and if there is a problem at a later date, it could be added. Mr. Spensley stated the Town is trying to have substantial deference and he did not agree with removing the comments. Mr. Gildrien noted the ultimate decision would be with the PUC, outside of zoning regulations like setbacks. It was suggested to leave the verbiage in the document for further discussion.

Page 19 – Rick Conway disagreed about the natural gas as it does not make sense. Jeremy Gildrien stated it could be removed but the Plan would not have any substance if the Town wanted to object during a PUC hearing. All were in agreement with removing item F. Robb Spensley did not want an enhanced energy plan that accounts for nothing and he felt as much detail should be in it as possible. He noted the Select Board can decide to make changes. Jeremy Gildrien advised with regard to intervening that the Select Board can intervene and adjoining property owners do have a say, but

not the general public. Mark Pape stated if it provides the Select Board with leverage, it will not make sense to take it out. Mr. Spensley stated he wants the document to have as much teeth as possible. Kevin Blow suggested leaving items in and during the public hearings, they can be specifically called out for discussion for some of the more contentious ones. Mr. Blow asked to highlight natural gas in the document. Mr. Conway stated we are burning fuel and oil and it is not as efficient and natural gas is the best solution for heating that has a distribution network and is cost effective. Mark Pape stated this is more about leaving the information in the document. Chuck Charbonneau noted an Act 250 application is very costly and was concerned with discouraging natural gas. Mr. Spensley suggested leaving it in and adding something that indicates considering available options while still having the teeth for noncompliance. Mr. Conway noted concern that a natural gas developer will come into a town that is welcoming. Ann Reed stated all Planning Commission members are represented and for now, leave it in and go to the hearings and advise this has been a contentious part and request input from the community before taking it out or leaving it in. She noted it is not the Planning Commission's plan but it is the community's plan.

Page 20 – Robb Spensley stated under transportation, 1 and 12 are duplicates of each other. The proposal for the charging stations near Pittsford Village Farm, he thinks Item 1 works well. Ann Reed stated as of 2 days ago, the project is still a go and organizing and planning is ongoing. Mr. Spensley stated it will be near some underserved community members and Item 12 can be removed. Mr. Spensley stated in transportation actions 8 and 9, those have already been accomplished in Pittsford. Mr. Gildrien will delete Items 8, 9 and 12. There were 2 actions about hosting annual events, one in thermal and Mr. Spensley was not sure if it were determined if this would be done. It was suggested to remove that and under Item 5 the annual presentation. Thermal action 7 is to be removed and transportation action regarding working with Go-VT. Kevin Blow stated with regard to providing information about ridesharing for Pittsford Days, who would be doing that. Mr. Spensley suggested this could be something that the Town could do. It was suggested to delete provide public outreach through the Middlebury Connector.

Mr. Gildrien stated under Electric Actions, there is information about utilizing the Town's check list for solar projects. Robb Spensley noted that he had sent this document to Mr. Gildrien and it has been adopted. Mr. Gildrien noted he will leave this in and will take out support future plan of natural gas under electric actions. Mr. Gildrien advised he had also crossed out items 3 and 4 on Page 20.

At the next meeting, maps will be provided. Mr. Gildrien noted the GIS expert at the RRPC will be creating them. The maps may take a little while as they were on hold until it was determined if there were to be preferred locations. Now that there are no preferred locations, the mapping can start. Mr. Gildrien stated the final draft with the changes can be provided to the Commission tomorrow without the maps. Ann Reed stated she is pushing the Select Board and Planning Commission on this plan as it has to be approved prior to getting a neighborhood district. It was the consensus of the Commission for Mr. Gildrien to provide the draft document without the maps for review. Mr. Gildrien will advise the status of maps.

A motion was made by Chuck Charbonneau and seconded by Robb Spensley to table the Item B under Old Business to a subsequent meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

7. New Business

There was no new business discussed.

8. Next Meeting

March 27, 2025 @ 7:00PM at the Pittsford Town Office

8. Adjournment

A motion was made by Chuck Charbonneau and seconded by Rick Conway to adjourn the meeting at 9:13PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,
Pittsford Planning Commission Meeting
February 27, 2025

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary

Approved by,

The Pittsford Planning Commission