

# Town of Chelsea, Vermont

## Planning Commission

### 2023 June 14 Meeting Minutes

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#### Meeting Information

Planning Commission Members: Bob Brannan, Chair  
Ed Kuban  
Gregg Herrin  
Justin Sauerwein  
Absent – Neil Kennedy  
Shenia Covey

Selectboard Members: None

TRORC Representatives: Sydney Steinle

Community Members: None

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order on 2023 June 29 (Wednesday) at approximately 7:00pm, at the Chelsea Town Hall.

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#### Old Business

##### Determination of Energy Compliance Certification

The Planning Commission members confirmed that they had researched the Determination of Energy Compliance Certification, and reaffirmed with Sydney Steinle that adding this to the overall process is not likely to create undue delays.

**Decision Summary:** The Planning Commission will seek Determination of Energy Compliance Certification with assistance from TRORC as part of the process to update the Plan.

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#### New Business

The Planning Commission proceeded to review and edit the first several chapters of the Plan, discussing updates and changes as they went. Individual changes are not captured as part of these minutes, but Sydney Steinle edited the source document in real-time.

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## Introduction Chapter

The Planning Commission discussed the importance of the town Plan as a tool for keeping the character of Chelsea, supporting applications for funding from State agencies, and addressing questions raised by businesses and individuals within the community. Sydney Steinle also explained how the Plan's goals, policies, and recommendations are utilized in this process.

The History section of the Chapter was recognized as being in need of editing to make it more concise. Rather than attempting to edit such a large section as a group, Justin Sauerwein offered to propose changes separately for the Planning Commission to review and approve at a future meeting.

- Justin Sauerwein** to deliver suggested History edits to the Planning Commission members.

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## Demographics Chapter

The demographics of the Town as set forth in the existing Plan were discussed briefly, but it was noted that any detailed discussion of the text would be moot without having updated data available. Data updates are something that TRORC can assist with.

- Sydney Steinle** to provide updated demographics data.

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## Economic Development Chapter

It was acknowledged that several businesses had closed since the Plan was last updated. Issues with the extents of the flood plain were discussed as hindering the ability of the town to attract businesses into the historic center of the village. The restrictions on any development within the flood plain deter businesses from locating in a large portion of the village and also substantially increases costs if one were to choose to locate in the village.

Because the flood plain appears to be overbroad, it has been suggested that efforts be made to revise the designation either on an individual property basis or have the entire map revised.

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## Housing Chapter

It was acknowledged that Chelsea, along with most of Vermont, has a shortage of affordable housing. The shortage is compounded by the flood plain designation covering a significant portion of the historic village by eliminating some housing altogether, or substantially increasing the cost of existing housing should individuals wish to sell those properties.

Changes to the flood plain designation were discussed as well as the new statutory requirement that mandates multi-family housing be included in areas currently permitting single family housing.

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## Public Input

While the intent of this revision of the Plan is designed to meet the compressed timeline and possibly seek increased public input and file an amended Plan at a later time, it was acknowledged that public input is important at all times. Consequently, it was recommended to seek input using Front Porch

Forum and the Chelsea Facebook page. Those avenues will be pursued as the Planning Commission and TRORC work to revise the Plan over the coming months.

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## General Readability

Gregg Herrin volunteered to make minor editing suggestions to improve the readability of the Plan, such as re-ordering list items and making wording changes to be more concise without changing the underlying intent. All were in favor of making such changes, for review and approval in future meetings.

- Gregg Herrin** to propose wording changes for the first few chapters to improve readability.

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## Next Meeting

**Decision Summary:** The next Planning Commission meeting will be on 2023 June 29 (Thursday) at 7:00pm, at the Chelsea Town Hall.

Sydney Steinle asked that the Planning Commission prepare for the next meeting with comments, edits, and suggestions for the next few Chapters.

- Planning Commission** to review roughly pages 26-50 of the Plan prior to the next meeting, covering the Chapters on Education, Utilities and Facilities, Recreation and Parks, and Health and Emergency Services.

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## Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00pm.