

Town of Chelsea, Vermont

Planning Commission

2023 June 29 Meeting Minutes

Meeting Information

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

Selectboard Members: Kelly Lyford

TRORC Representatives: Absent – Sydney Steinle

Community Members: None

Note that Sydney Steinle, the assigned representative from TRORC (Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission) was not present, but had provided general suggestions via email on topics to cover.

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

Old Business

Prior Meeting Minutes

Bob Brannan distributed draft minutes from the 2023 June 01 and 2023 June 14 meetings.

- Planning Commission members** to review those draft minutes, and provide any comments at the next meeting.

General Readability

Gregg Herrin noted that he was not yet able to suggest minor wording and sequencing changes for the first few chapters of the Plan as discussed at the prior meeting, due to a revised working copy of the Plan only being available late on 2023 June 25.

- Gregg Herrin** to deliver suggested edits of the first few chapters to the Planning Commission members.

Compressed Town History

Justin Sauerwein noted that he had not yet had time to revise the History section of the Introduction chapter of the Plan, intended to provide a relevant but more concise history of the Town.

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

Updated Demographics and Other Data

With Sydney Steinle absent, it was noted that the demographics and other data had not yet been updated.

- Sydney Steinle** to provide updated demographics and related information for the first several chapters, to allow Planning Commission members to review and provide comments and suggested edits for related text.

Public Input

It was confirmed that more public engagement is desirable, to collect feedback and to anticipate additional concerns from the townspeople.

- Bob Brannan** to collect feedback through the Chelsea Facebook page and Front Porch Forum community associated with the Town.

New Business

Appointment of a Secretary

It was noted that the Planning Commission is required to have a Secretary, and that the primary duties of that role are to capture and distribute meeting minutes. After discussion of the duties, required skills, and expected time commitments, Gregg Herrin volunteered to be secretary.

Shenia Covey motioned to appoint Gregg Herrin as secretary, Justin Sauerwein seconded, and all voted in favor.

Decision Summary: Gregg Herrin was elected as Secretary of the Planning Commission.

When meeting minutes or other relevant documents are available, they are to be shared with all Planning Commission members and Sydney Steinle from TRORC, with copy to Selectboard members Kevin Marshia and William Lyon, and also copy to Patty Swahn (Administrative Assistant).

- Bob Brannan** to send electronic copies of prior meeting minutes to Gregg Herrin to maintain consistent records.

Education Chapter

It was noted that the Chelsea Public School Facilities & Physical Assets section needs significant edits, including an overhaul of the introductory information, updated enrollment data, removal of the Recommendations for Capital Improvements section (since school facilities are no longer owned by the Town), and an update on the services provided by Brookhaven.

It was also noted that the First Branch Unified District may be seeking approval for a Public Universal Pre-K, housed in Chelsea.

- Bob Brannan** to suggest edits for the entire Education chapter, including a shortened introduction, a summary of the school facilities and governance (including Tunbridge elements, since Chelsea students go there too).
- Kelly Lyford** to provide updated enrollment data.
- Shenia Covey** to contact Brookhaven to confirm or update services that they provide.

Utilities and Facilities Chapter

It was discussed that the current Utilities and Facilities chapter could potentially be split into multiple chapters, based on town-owned facilities (such as Chelsea Town Hall), town-owned utilities (such as the water and sewer systems), and non-town-owned utilities (such as internet). Since no one present was aware of the benefits or consequences of making changes, it was decided to await guidance from Sydney Steinle when she returns.

- Planning Commission members** to seek guidance from Sydney Steinle about possible chapter reorganization.

There was confusion regarding what has and has not been done with regards to energy efficiency improvements for Town Hall and other facilities.

- Justin Sauerwein** to contact Karen Lathrop and/or Jesse Kay about energy improvements, and confirm which items from the prior Plan have already been addressed.

There was discussion about possible ways to address space concerns as noted in the current Plan, with possible ideas about using the old town garage as storage archives, saving space through digitalization of records, and so on.

- Justin Sauerwein** to talk to Karen Lathrop about storage concerns, possible improvements, and ideas about digitalization (for incoming documents and/or current archives).

The Chelsea Town Garage section is completely outdated, since a new garage has been built since the time the last Plan was published. The old town garage does still exist, so should still be included in the chapter, but the section needs to be completely overhauled to reflect the current situation.

- Ed Kuban** to propose an overhauled Chelsea Town Garage section.

It was also noted that many locations are described through non-permanent reference points (such as a business). This is a bad practice, since businesses may come and go over time, and new or unfamiliar residents may find those references unhelpful.

Decision Summary: All locations should be identified by an address if possible, and accompanied by a map where practical and helpful.

No one present was familiar enough with the Public Library section to provide meaningful input, so it was decided to reach out to a Library representative to provide updates.

- Gregg Herrin** to seek assistance from Chintana Herrin or Kezia Frayjo.

The Public Lands section appears to exclude parcels like the land that the Town Hall sits on, the Commons, and possibly others. It is unclear if this is intentional.

- Planning Commission** to seek clarification from Sydney Steinle regarding inclusion or intentional exclusion of various town-owned lands.

Discussion around the Public Sewer Systems and Public Water Systems sections raised many questions about the condition, capacity, and other concerns of those systems. It was identified that a recent inspection of the sewer and/or water systems was done (possibly by Otter Creek Engineering), which may answer some of those questions. There were also questions raised about whether or not any water treatment is done, and whether or not there are any concerns about PFAS substances (per- and polyfluoroalkyls, also known as “forever chemicals”).

- Gregg Herrin** to talk to Kevin Marshia about the system(s) inspection, fire protection in the village, and yield of wells.
- Shenia Covey** to seek more information regarding water treatment and PFAS chemicals.

There were no specific updates requested for the Solid Waste Management section, but it was noted that getting some additional perspective on the current situation would be helpful.

- Shenia Covey** to seek more information about possible concerns or desires for the Solid Waste Management section.

Next Meeting

It was noted that Sydney Steinle will not be available until the end of July, but Planning Commission members expressed a desire to meet again in mid-July in order to continue progressing on the updated Plan.

Decision Summary: The next Planning Commission meeting will be on 2023 July 18 (Tuesday) at 7:00pm. The location is to be determined, since that time will overlap with a Selectboard meeting, creating a conflict for locating the meeting at the Chelsea Town Hall.

- Gregg Herrin** to find out if the Town Library can be reserved as a location to host the meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:15pm.