Planning Commission

Town of Weston

PO Box 98, Weston, VT 05161-0098

Minutes of Meeting, March 4, 2024

Present: James (Lexi) Young, Geof Brown, Tom Ettinger, Lisa Swett, and Matt Bachler

Guest: none

Not Present: Chris Morrow, Morgan Hart

Due to missing town computer, zoom was not initiated.

1. Lexi Young declares a PC quorum and calls the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.
2. Additions / Changes to the Agenda:
   a. Additional chapters discussed based on rewrites from Matt based on last meetings.
3. Review re-write of "Energy Chapter" and "Transportation Chapter" by Matt Bachler, Senior Planner with Windam Regional Commission.
   a. **Energy Chapter** – Matt reviewed changes to the chapter based on last meeting.
   b. Tom mentioned small scale solar projects as being a potential opportunity for the town as they are being encouraged by the state. Matt will research.
   c. Lexi pointed out that many policies are beyond the scope of the town's authority. Matt indicated that many of these are designed to work with other agencies authority over the town and provides the town some measure of protection, especially in proceedings where the town's plan is consulted or referenced (example Act 250).
   d. Lexi observed that in various sections there are policies articulated which in some instances conflict, overlap, or seem outdated. In some cases, there just seem to be too many policies. He also suggested using language that is less prohibitive to afford the PC flexibility when it comes time to revise the zoning bylaws. An example discussed had to do with the prohibition against road widening.
   e. **Transportation Chapter** – Matt reviewed changes to the chapter based on last meeting.
   f. Matt will add a paragraph relative to the gas station – i.e. maintaining it or something similar within the village radius. Also, add a comment on the need for a store to support the local population. It will be added to the land use section.
4. Town Plan Update: Review of sections: "Flood Resiliency" and "Housing". Discussion led by Matt Bachler.
   a. **Housing Chapter** – Matt reviewed his thinking on restructuring the chapter. Not suggesting a full assessment of housing needs but a general statement of direction.
   b. Discussion was had that a couple of obvious methods to increase housing stock could be effectuated by making it easier for the modification of existing single-family dwellings into multifamily dwellings, the addition of rentable apartments to existing single-family homes, and the construction of more than one single-family dwelling on a lot.

    c. Geof suggested the notion of information relative to short term rental registry and adding language that guides the future.

    d. **Flood Resiliency** – Matt mentioned that he updated the current flood hazard plan and will incorporate that info into the current document. Matt also suggested that this chapter is too technical and that should be more meaningful if it focused on the need for resiliency for the public good.

5. **Other Chapter Updates** – Matt reviewed the other changes to chapters that previously had been updated.

    a. Matt will make one change relative to land section to remove language around encouraging current use given Weston only has 28% of land that is not in current use, or not conserved by public or non-profit entities.

    b. We also discussed the upcoming town walking tour – needs to be done before finishing up the draft. Could combine with the public meeting. We will move the walk to June to coincide with the public meeting.

    c. Geof will notify on behalf of the PC how the PC website is structured, what is available to review for the Selectboard. Possibly add a BBQ component.

6. Approve Minutes- February 5, 2024 – Lexi motioned to approve, Lisa seconded. All in favor.

7. New and Old Business:

    a. Geof reviewed the website changes and his work with Shawna.

8. Lexi motions to adjourn the meeting at 7:23 pm. Lisa seconded the motion. *Motion passes unanimously.*

Approved: _____ James Young, Chair   Date____4-1-24____

Submitted: _____ Geof Brown, Secretary   Date____4-1-24____