

Montpelier Planning Commission
Monday, February 10, 2003
City Hall, 7:00 pm

Subject to Review and Approval

Present: Chair David Borgendale, Vice-Chair Sara Teachout, Members Bryan Mitofsky, Anne Campbell, Irene Facciolo, Curt McCormack, Planning Director Valerie Capels
Others present: Geoff Beyer, Beverlee Hill, Stephan Syz, Dr. Richard Hansen

Call to Order by the Chair.

Mr. Borgendale called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

Approval of the Minutes.

Ms. Teachout moved to approve the December 9, 2002 meeting minutes, seconded by Ms. Facciolo. Ms. Campbell noted that there a number of grammatical and semantic errors. The motion passed 5-0-1 with Mr. McCormack abstaining.

Mr. Mitofsky moved to approve the January 27, 2003 meeting minutes, seconded by Ms. Teachout. Mr. McCormack clarified the statement that was a member of the legislature, not worked for it. Mr. Mitofsky noted a typo at the top of page two that should read "49% or less". The motion passed 6-0.

Comments from the Chair

The Chair had no additional comments.

Review of the Agenda

No comments.

North Branch River Bike Path Park Project

Ms. Capels explained that the City received a Land & Water Conservation Fund grant that requires evidence of support from the planning commission. A memo was included in the commission's package providing information about the project.

Mr. Mitofsky asked about the Shipman Place pocket park and why one is before the commission and not the other. Ms. Capels replied that it is a completely separate project. Commission review of projects is a topic she would like to talk with the commission about.

Beverlee Hill described the background of this project. Stephan Syz and Geoff Beyer explained the variety of details about the project, issues relating to surrounding properties, and its connections to other path systems. Members gathered around the central table to review the plans and maps of the project area.

Commissioners raised concerns about traffic and the safety of children in the park. Mr. Mitofsky said that he would like to see some kind of barrier between the park and the street. He also expressed concern about demands and costs for maintenance, such as mowing and trash removal. Mr. Beyer explained that the Parks and Cemetery include funds in their budgets for park maintenance Regarding the proposed canoe launch, commissioners questioned how people will park and transport them to the river's edge. Mr. Beyer said that parallel parking exists on the street.

Mr. McCormack moved that the Commission find the proposed project is consistent with the Master Plan, seconded by Ms. Campbell. The motion passed unanimously.

Visioning/Public Process

Mr. Mitofsky distributed and summarized a document he prepared summarizing his research and considerations regarding public process.

Ms. Capels described the difference between the requirements and purposes of a public hearing and a public meeting.

There was brief discussion about the various reasons the commission might wish to solicit public input on various topics. Ms. Campbell referenced the Town Planning handout produced by the regional planning commission.

The Commission agreed to continue the discussion at another meeting.

Dr. Richard Hansen, resident of West Street and vice-chair of the Montpelier Downtown Community Association, said that the MDCA is very interested in being involved and working with the commission on its visioning process. The MDCA represents a lot of stakeholders of the downtown.

Planning Commission Retreat

Mr. Borgendale summarized the brainstorming he and Ms. Capels did prior to the meeting. One thing he would like to discuss is how the agendas get managed over the long term and how to get them out to the public sooner.

Ms. Capels asked that the subject of project review be added to the retreat topics. With the new configuration of the commission and its duties, it is no longer clear what role the commission has in review of community projects, or when a program requires planning commission approval.

Mr. Mitofsky referred to the resolution that formed the new commission and the breadth of areas the commission is expected to be involved in.

Mr. Borgendale clarified that his idea about a facilitator was not to walk us through the entire meeting but more to help them work through how to be an effective board. Does the commission have a common vision about what its doing and what its goals are?

There was agreement that a retreat should be scheduled soon, within the next month, and for a longer period than a regular meeting would allow. Monday, March 10, from 1:00-6:00 PM was selected. Any additional time needed will be scheduled for another day.

Ms. Capels will contact the Vermont League of Cities and Towns for a reference on a facilitator who may have experience working with volunteer boards

Transportation Plan RFP Update

Ms. Capels said there is no update on the Transportation RFP.

February 12 Council Meeting Preparation

Ms. Capels reported that 30 minutes has been allocated on the Council's February 12, 2003 agenda to meet with the chairs or other representatives of the boards. The Council is interested in feedback on how the new system is working and hearing from the members of any issues they would like to discuss.

Mr. Mitofsky asked why the Council has on its agenda consideration of creating a committee to undertake permit process review, when it's on the commission's to-do list. Ms. Capels explained that this was initiated by the MDCA and is not intended to duplicate the 1997 report produced by the city manager; it's an opportunity to step back and see how things are working. The potential role of commission was discussed. Mr. Mitofsky questioned whether this should be a subcommittee of the planning commission.

Mr. Mitofsky asked that the commission be provided with a list of all the committees that exist. Ms. Capels noted that all the City-related committees will be listed in the annual report.

Commissioners suggested the following topics or updates:

- report progress on the requested zoning change
- review the commission's approach to the Master Plan update
- ask about the permit review committee
- seek input from Council about when the commission should review community projects

Other Business

Because the next meeting falls within school vacation week and many members will not be available, there was consensus that the February 24 meeting should be canceled due to lack of a quorum.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie J. Capels, Director