

**Montpelier Planning Commission**  
**November 23, 2009**  
**City Council Chambers, City Hall**

*Subject to Review and Approval*

**Present:** Jesse Moorman, Chair; David Borgendale, Vice Chair; Missa Aloisi, John Bloch, Alan Goldman, Bethany Pombar and Lou Cecere, Jr.; also present was Norman James.  
Staff: Gwen Hallsmith, Planning & Community Development Director, and Kristin Feierabend, VISTA Volunteer.

**Call to Order:**

Jesse Moorman, Chair, called the November 23, 2009 meeting of the Montpelier Planning Commission to order at 7:00 P.M.

**Review of Minutes:**

Upon motion by Mr. Borgendale and Ms. Aloisi the minutes of the November 9<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission were approved unanimously.

**enVision Master Plan:**

Gwen Hallsmith said enVision Montpelier started back in 2007. They convened a stakeholder group and have been meeting monthly in both a large stakeholder group and five or six subcommittees for the last two years. The whole planning process was a new one for the city. Typically, in the past the city has prepared a Master Plan that has been in compliance with the state laws and enabling legislation which has largely focused on land use and infrastructure development. They decided to take a new approach to the Master Plan and try to create a sustainable Master Plan for the city that looked over a longer term time frame of 30 to 100 years out. This is partially because sustainability is such a critical issue to us today and what our children and grandchildren are going to do in the city is an important issue for many people. But also partially this was to expand the scope of the Master Plan so it addresses more of the issues they see in the Planning Department as really important issues and which organizations and groups from around the city come to them for assistance. The Planning Department isn't just the Planning Department but also Planning and Community Development. They serve as the community development for the City of Montpelier. Other cities do have separate nonprofit entities that serve in that capacity. Even in Randolph they have a Community Development Corporation. That means they are faced with people who need to write grant applications on everything from daycare to senior care to housing to other issues. Having a Master Plan that addresses the wide variety of issues in our community gives people more of a policy direction to use when they are making applications for grants, and it also makes any of those grants stronger. That is a lot of the reasoning behind moving into a broader master planning process which includes a number of different topics that had not been previously developed by Master Plans in the past.

When they looked at what sustainability means they focused that around human needs framed the dialogue around sustainable development and has since the very beginning which was when the United Nations pulled together a big panel of all the leading economists and environmentalists around the world to figure out how we can pursue an economically viable planet without simultaneously destroying the environment. The definition they came up with at that point for sustainable development was meeting our needs today without denying future generations the ability to meet their needs. When you look through the Master Plan there are a number of goal topics. Each of those goal topics mostly reflect the basic human needs that the plan addresses.

Economics and Livelihoods diverged a little bit from that and some of their topics aren't the actual human needs but are still very important topics. Meaningful work is a human need that is addressed. Opportunity is addressed. Human needs themselves and the way they are addressed by the economy are listed here as part of that. When we move into infrastructure and governance and the natural environment and social systems you'll see a lot more correlation between the needs themselves and the topics of the goals and targets and strategies.

The goals that were developed by the stakeholders and subsequently adopted by the City Council last summer are aspirational goals so they are looking out 30 to 100 years in the future and trying to envision what the city would be like if those needs were satisfied and satisfied in a sustainable way. If the goals seem aspirational or vague it is partially

because they are supposed to be long range and outcome based. What does it feel like in the city when the needs are met in a satisfactory way in that area? What brings them down to earth or makes them less vague, more specific and more implementable are supposed to be the targets which are concrete and measurable steps towards those goals. Targets have a few important characteristics typically. Sometimes they will have some type of measurable outcome, a percentage you can measure or an actual number you can measure. Typically they will have a date by which the target is going to be achieved and hopefully they are put in language that is more concrete.

The strategies are how you achieve those targets. The strategies are really defining an action proposal that moves us toward the targets. The targets and goals are outcomes, and the strategies are the work we do to achieve those outcomes. Once we identify and prioritize the strategies then it will be up to us to identify particular organizations, programs and policies in the city that would pick them up and carry them forward. Some of the strategies in the plan would be for the city to take action on, but certainly not all of them. The goal of the whole plan was to be a whole community plan, and that is somewhat different than master plans in the past as well which have been primarily city focused.

For example, in Burlington when they did this process back in 1999 and 2000 and they had this huge outcry from the neighborhoods about the University housing transforming single family neighborhoods into rowdy student centered areas where there was a lot of parking on lawns and noise late at night the University took that piece of the plan and decided to build more dorm space, which they have done since that time, to bring more of the students back on to campus. The University was a stakeholder in the process and the University took ownership and responsibility for the elements of the plan they were responsible for implementing, and they are hoping that same process will follow through here.

The way they proceeded with the Planning Commission is that each Planning Commissioner has taken responsibility for one of the committees. Each committee had both a Planning Commissioner and someone the committee elected to serve as co-chairs of that committee. Since there has been a lot of turnover recently on the Planning Commission we don't have anybody here tonight that have actually been serving in that capacity and started off in Social Systems and moved to Governance. John Bloch was the elected committee chair for Economics and Norm James is here. Both John and Norm were with the Economics and Livelihoods Committee right from the beginning. David Borgendale was on Governance and then moved to Economics. Ultimately, the Planning Commission is going to be the ones who are responsible for finalizing the language in this plan and sending it on to City Council. The way they have organized that part of the process is that each month from now through March we'll be looking at a different part of the plan. Once all of the parts of the plan are complete the Planning Commission will have a hearing on it and then forward it on to City Council for final adoption as the city's Master Plan. The current Master Plan expires in July so we need a new one by then to keep our master planning current.

They initially imagined that the enVision Plan might be different than the Master Plan, but now they are trying to combine the two so they will be the same. They have also designed an online survey and rolling it out month by month with the different sections. They will be trying to compile all of the different citizen priorities for the Planning Commission and the City Council as they receive them. The way the online survey is designed is to help you identify the top five priorities in each of the issue areas by bringing you through a set of choices that help you choose a priority each time you are on a screen that will eventually help you identify what your highest priorities are for the city. There have been about 60 people already who have answered the survey. At the next meeting they will be able to give the results of the Economics survey to see if the priorities match up with the ones they had at the stakeholder meeting.

Ms. Aloisi inquired if they would bring this document to the City Council and have them adopt this as our Master Plan. She doesn't see how this document could become the Master Plan.

Ms. Hallsmith said this is just the goals and strategies part. There is a whole lot of data that goes with it.

Ms. Aloisi said referring to this as the Master Plan she doesn't think the Planning Commission should be doing that.

Ms. Hallsmith said this is part of the Master Plan, and it is a critical part of it as well.

Ms. Aloisi said there is the current plan we have to revise.

Ms. Hallsmith added they don't have to revise the current one. They can take the parts of the current Master Plan that are relevant and move them into this document. A Master Plan is basically a policy document that includes a lot of information so the information that feeds into these priorities are a big part of the process. It is basically a description of the city and a description of all of the data that goes into the understanding of the different issues they are addressing. Then, there is the policy part. One of the things they still need to do is to make sure they are framing the policies around the implementation mechanisms like zoning and subdivision regulation adequately and clearly enough so that it has adequate policy backup for it. This will be the Master Plan. It's a different one than we have had in the past and it is not necessarily going to look like the one we have had in the past.

Ms. Pombar asked if the Planning Commission has a decisive voice on language in the plan. She is confused about what their task at hand is. The language coming from the committees probably feels very familiar to them and is based on discussions they have had, but she sees a lot of broad language here that could be banged out some more.

Ms. Hallsmith said if they have suggestions for changes in language that is fine. If there is a major policy shift they envision then it should go back to the committee. The decisive voice in everything is the City Council. The Planning Commission will be passing this on to City Council as a document they have endorsed.

Mr. Borgendale said by state law the Planning Commission is charged with preparing master plans and it is their obligation to get it down. The Planning Commission does have a lot to say about what the master plan says. What we are preparing here is a guide to public policy for city government for some time so it has to be expressed in a language that is useful for doing that.

Ms. Hallsmith said she would suggest at this point if it is a definitional or clarification point it is up to the Planning Commission to take care of. If it is a major shift in the policy direction they would convene the committee again. The committee has completed their work, passed it on to the steering committee and they have reviewed this, and now they are passing it on to the Planning Commission.

Ms. Aloisi said there is a lot in here about baselines. Is the Planning Commission going to be tasked with defining the baselines?

Ms. Hallsmith replied no, they are still working on that. Part of the baseline data had to do with the survey which was conducted by city government about peoples' perceptions of city government. That will give us a baseline on a lot of things. They received the final report last week and will do a public meeting on it some time soon and publish it on the web. We do now have a statistically accurate document that describes how citizens around the city feel about a wide variety of issues that range from how our roads are repaired to the Planning Department to air pollution. Any time you see in the document that people in Montpelier have the perception that they live in a safe neighborhood we actually have a baseline for how they feel about that right now. The other piece of the baseline obviously has to do with all the data we have been collecting for the Master Plan, which is updating a lot of stuff in the existing Master Plan but also looking for new information. If you look at the whole document that is prepared so far, but this is the crux of the policy decisions that need to be made.

Ms. Pombar said she wonders if having that baseline data will inform the Planning Commission's decisions on whether or not something feels tangible given the currently existing data surrounding that. If something is measured at 50 percent and we want to increase it by 50 percent she wonders if that data would be informative.

Ms. Hallsmith said some of the things they have said in here as measurements so far potentially are not measurable. She has already changed some of the language to reflect that. The books on their desks contain all of the planning documents we have to date. That includes the current Master Plan, current zoning and also the legislative enabling framework for doing this planning. The enabling legislation gives the state goals for comprehensive planning. As you can see from the state goals it covers more than what we have traditionally covered here in Montpelier in our master planning documents.

The City Council has also moved to frame their annual goals in these five broad categories as well so they are working to bring city policy and direction into alignment with this comprehensive approach. You will see when you look at the City Council's annual goals that they have goals now in social and human development, governance, infrastructure, economics and natural environment as well. All of these issue areas are really critical to the way the city operates. Just acknowledging that and trying to understand all of the different systems we have in the city and that city government has an impact on are important to any Master Plan we do.

Ms. Hallsmith suggested they continue with the revisions by starting from the beginning and see if the corrections they made in the Planning Department based on the feedback from the Planning Commission from the last meeting are incorporated. For instance, green jobs are jobs that reduce the total energy use and environmental impact on the planet. Then, it talks about creating opportunities in these fields.

Mr. Moorman said they had a discussion about what green jobs means. The more he sees it the more he sees it defined in the target already.

Ms. Hallsmith said it is something that has a reduction in energy and a reduction in environmental impact. If you are an insulator of homes, putting on solar panels, driving a public transit bus, those are the kinds of jobs.

Mr. Bloch said he has a problem when they say they are going to increase it by 50 percent because he doesn't know where they are now, and this gives us only five years to do that.

Ms. Hallsmith said they should think about that as a target because she doesn't know how they are going to measure if they increase by 50 percent. Maybe they are looking by 2015 to know what percentage of green jobs we have in the economy so by then we can start to set a target.

Mr. Bloch replied that is a very different statement than the one they have here.

Ms. Hallsmith said they are working on biomass district energy.

Ms. Aloisi said that is where green needs to be defined further.

Ms. Hallsmith said they could just say renewable biomass district energy because that is what the city is working on actually. Renewable biomass district energy would meet your needs.

Mr. Bloch said he thinks by 2015 they should say they will have an inventory of how many jobs are in place that reduces the dependence on oil.

Ms. Hall said strategy 1 (a) is to create these opportunities and strategy 1 (b) is to measure the number of jobs in that category so we understand the total impact on the local economy. They could say by 2015 increase jobs that reduce total energy use and environmental impact on the planet. Measure the number of these jobs in the local economy so we have an understanding of their impact. We want to create opportunities in this field as our first goal whether we know how many there are in total or not.

Mr. Borgendale said another thing that comes up in defining what fields of work we talk about we have to be careful in the terminology and it might be best to leave it a little fuzzy. For instance, we talk about district energy. Not all renewable biomass is necessarily desirable when you look at system wide impacts. He would be very much opposed to putting much effort into district energy that was based on corn produced ethanol, which is still renewable biomass. That is probably not something we want to do. He gives that as an example of the kind of thing they have to be very careful in terms of definitions.

Ms. Aloisi said it is the same thing with green buildings. In building they reduce the environmental impact on the planet.

Ms. Hallsmith said it could be economically efficient buildings.

Mr. Bloch said impact is the operable word there.

Ms. Pombar said they took green out previously because of its vagueness.

Mr. Moorman said if they take it out it is still limited by the definition at the top that says to reduce the total energy use and environmental impact. All of these opportunities are limited. He has no problem taking green out.

Ms. Hallsmith said she feels they need to characterize it. The role this plays in policy means that we shouldn't define building.

Ms. Aloisi said she thinks in infrastructure they will be defining building.

Ms. Hallsmith said for this particular one they should be saying something about the kind of building they are trying to promote.

Mr. Moorman said they do if you read it in its context under the target.

Ms. Aloisi said in public transportation are they saying they are using bio fuels.

Ms. Hallsmith said public transit even without bio fuels is more efficient and lower impact than single rider automobiles. Public transit by definition is something that is going to reduce total energy use and environmental impact whereas building is not by definition going to do unless you characterize it and define it.

Ms. Pombar said she wants to set attainable goals. She isn't sure if they say by 2015 they want all builders to use a life cycle analysis that it is a useful tool.

Ms. Hallsmith said energy efficient and low impact building will take care of it. You are energy efficient if you use life cycle analysis in figuring out what your materials are. They will change green to energy efficient and low impact building.

Mr. Borgendale said there is one other thing missing. There are some kinds of jobs that aren't necessarily green in the sense of what the work product is but because of how they are performed. Odds are that jobs that involve telecommuting are probably greener than jobs that don't. We assume that telecommuting is more energy efficient than not, but he doesn't know on a system basis that is really true.

Mr. Moorman said he doesn't believe we intend this list to be the end all.

In Target #2, 2(a)(2) there were some changes she tried to interpret and refine. Now it says promote carbon trading as a means to reduce carbon dioxide emissions so we can become a net exporter of carbon credits in addition to fostering a trading system within our local region.

Ms. Aloisi asked what the baseline of sustainable business practices is.

Kristin Feierabend said she thinks no one reports them currently.

Ms. Aloisi asked if there was a model they were going to use.

Ms. Hallsmith replied there are a number of models. She likes the GRI, the Global Reporting Initiative, because that puts businesses on the same playing field as companies all over the world and maybe makes us more competitive as a result. There are other ones. There are national ones. We could say they are consistent with the Global Reporting Initiative.

Ms. Pombar said under 2 (a) regarding sustainable business practices she is wondering if they should say support instead as far as the tangibility of work that comes out around that target. Maybe we should say support instead of

encourage. You can encourage by doing outreach and education around the cost benefit of green business, but support is a much more tangible measure. It is still technically encouraging them to participate but not mandating it.

Mr. Goldman asked if they wanted to apply these practices to an area they allow to grow like Berlin where we provide the water and sewer but encourage them as well. There is an awful lot of growth happening up there.

Ms. Hallsmith said it seems we have more influence on stuff within the city.

Mr. Goldman said we have certainly enabled them to grow, and they are growing.

Ms. Hallsmith said that might be a good thing to bring up under infrastructure when they are talking about the sewer system because that is an important question. How do we manage growth along our infrastructure? And where are we going to encourage that?

Mr. Borgendale said basically in all of these things we are trying to identify ways to take what economists call externalities and force them into the pricing system and you have to have government police power to do that.

Ms. Hallsmith said they could clarify 2(a)(2) to say that once a national or state cap is in place because that would make it clear for people. Once a national or state cap on emissions is in place we can promote carbon trading. We need someone else to provide that mandate. Cities can't do that very effectively.

Ms. Hallsmith said with regards to Goal B, the first section is under target 4.

Ms. Aloisi asked if Target 1(a)(4) could be moved to the top.

Mr. Borgendale asked if the order in which things are listed imply a priority.

Ms. Hallsmith replied not really. The way the priorities work is more to do with how soon and how much. When things are listed by 2015 they are pretty much what people are saying what the top priorities ought to be because that is in the next few years. When they are listed as 2020 or 2040 they are things we still want to do but it isn't as high a priority on the minds of most of the people who have participated.

Mr. Moorman said in looking at footnote 3 he has a note from the last meeting that nonessential goods and services that should be produced locally but currently are not instead of can be produced locally. The issue there is that something can be produced locally. Can should be changed to should in footnote 3.

Ms. Hallsmith said under target 4 there are still some asterisks there so it isn't completed. By 2015 the employment clusters that provide the bulk of jobs in Montpelier – state government, insurance, higher education, food production and service, health services and cultural activities – all report that they are supported by the local community. They have had the survey so it is possible to measure peoples' perceptions of things as a proxy for actual conditions. She has a further meeting from the Planning Commission's last meeting where they felt it was important to create criteria for the kinds of jobs we want here and then retain those that exist and attract those that don't exist. In number 1 where we talked about increasing jobs that reduced total energy use and environmental impact we are actually talking about the kind of jobs we want to bring here. There are also these existing clusters that this target really is focused on supporting. This was an important discussion at the steering committee level and in the committee so she is a little reluctant suggest in any of our language that any of our existing clusters are not something we want to encourage in the future because most, if not all, of our existing clusters are good solid job areas for Montpelier. If we are looking at expanding green jobs we might think of another category we want to expand jobs in. She wouldn't want to suggest in the way they word this target that we think any of our existing job clusters are not what we want to support in the future because her sense is from every conversation they have had about this they are, that we want to foster these jobs in the future as well.

Mr. James said he would like to be careful about talking about anything in terms of industry specific because six years from now we may have some industry that we don't know about now. If all of a sudden they are not on our list have we automatically excluded them? He would like to go back to what they said originally and that is the general overall

broad things that do good and avoid evil. That's the kind of jobs we want. We have the sustainable business practices, but if the business isn't able to sustain itself it may be as a result of some external issue. We are talking not about next year. Right at the beginning we are talking about six years and the quantum leap to about 15 or 20 years down the road.

Ms. Hallsmith said maybe they could say that by 2015 the employment clusters that currently provide the bulk of jobs in Montpelier – state government, insurance, higher education, food production, health services and cultural activities.

Mr. Bloch said higher education is an industry and not all higher education jobs are at a livable wage. All you have to do is look at the number of adjunct people who are hired and they are paid way below the scale that a full time person in the same job is paid.

Mr. Borgendale said you could say that about any of those jobs. It's true in health, food production and probably true in government and insurance.

Mr. Bloch said just recently they got the bottom of the scale in state government up to a livable wage, and that is less than five years ago.

Ms. Pombar said one cluster she doesn't see represented here are the nonprofits. Statewide nonprofits make up a huge industry in Vermont and she is sure that is reflected in our community here also. Nonprofits are one of the sticky wickets around livable wage in Vermont. She wonders if they should be including them in our employment clusters.

Ms. Hallsmith inquired if they should have nonprofits in the sector.

Mr. Moorman asked if they qualified as a cluster that provides the bulk of jobs in Montpelier.

Ms. Pombar said statewide it is up to 60 percent.

Ms. Hallsmith said they do. There are nonprofit health services and nonprofit cultural activities and nonprofit higher education institutions. They are a form rather than a function. That is a good thing to highlight. We could add nonprofit organizations to the list.

Mr. Borgendale inquired about law firms.

Mr. Bloch replied they are an industry.

Mr. James said that is exactly what he is talking about. You are going to have law firms, doctors, nurses, and engineers which are highly paid professional people who know how to sustain themselves.

Ms. Hallsmith said there are some good points on both sides. There was a real strong interest on the steering committee, and from the Mayor in particular, to really highlight the sectors that exist in a way that sounds supportive. We don't have a big manufacturing base here. We don't have a big high tech industry group here. We do have state government, insurance, food service, health service. There are these sectors that provide a big chunk of the jobs in town. The goal here was to highlight them and say we want them to understand that even with all of this talk about green jobs and other strategies that we want them to feel supported by the local community because they are.

Mr. Bloch said there are two sectors he is concerned that are missing here. That is the service industry, such as a plumber, electrician or mechanic.

Mr. Moorman asked if maybe that notion isn't appropriate for outside of the target.

Ms. Aloisi asked if it could be moved to a strategy area.

Mr. Moorman said outside of the entire policy framework they are working on here there is going to be some language about what our city is, what is existing, how it came to be and how we hope to see it in the future. In there they could recognize these important players.

Ms. Hallsmith said they could just eliminate the list and have the current employment clusters that provide the bulk of jobs in Montpelier report they are supported.

Mr. Moorman said he would imagine there is a separate place in our plan as it is finalized outside of the policies where we can recognize these industries more specifically.

Ms. Pombar said the whole target could be read as to say we want the majority of our businesses to feel supported by the community but we really don't care about the minority, the little ones that don't make up the bulk of the work.

Mr. James said it raises the question to him as to how you determine whether the community is going to accept any business. This determines what the community is going to do. You can give it guidance to do that in the Master Plan, but to actually say I support you the people will decide that. Turn the language around so the Master Plan encourages the development of business that would be conducive to community acceptance.

Mr. Bloch or needed by the community because if an anti zoning effort goes on with small machine shops or automotive shops. We now have a situation here where if you want a home appliance fixed you need to go to Burlington and hope that one of the big dealers will come down to Montpelier on a Thursday or alternating Monday when the water is low. It used to be there was a town tinkerer who came and worked on the appliances in the home. If you start making a list you really start drawing a noose around. We also need to understand what a community really needs to function as a healthy business and civic environment. He doesn't like to see our money going out of town for services.

Ms. Pombar said she thinks the strategies ought to speak to the larger goal.

Mr. Bloch said the majority of the employers may not be meeting some of the crucial needs of the community. It may be those small fringe or minority employers who are meeting some vital needs in the community.

Ms. Hallsmith said this target really wasn't met to include all of whatever we were going to do to promote all businesses. It was really a target they felt was important for the existing clusters. There are others that deal with encouraging entrepreneurial activities bringing in new businesses and other types of things going on.

Mr. Moorman said he doesn't read this as being exclusive and excluding support for smaller businesses or otherwise. He reads it just as he was intended that we recognize the existing big guys and we appreciate them. Goal D might better address the entrepreneurial opportunities and small businesses and new and creative businesses.

Ms. Aloisi said they could say by 2015 increase employment clusters that currently or will provide a need to the city of Montpelier.

Ms. Hallsmith said what she would propose as a rewording would be: "By 2015 the employment clusters that provide the bulk of jobs in Montpelier report they are supported by the local community." Take the list out.

Mr. Moorman said in strategy 1 (a) where it says existing and new businesses the idea behind this was recognizing that we have existing employers and then there are employment clusters which could conceivably create offshoots that support the existing businesses. They could also create an environment that supports related businesses.

Ms. Hallsmith said to look at the cluster we have in town with food production and service. There are lots of new businesses that start up in that cluster. The clusters are actually important.

Ms. Aloisi said the target is the measurable outcome and the strategy is the action. We want the measurable outcome in target 4 to be that businesses say they are supported by the local community, both new and existing. The language



in target 1 doesn't read as that. It is saying that the current employer clusters measure they are supported by our local community.

Ways to measure economic well being are commonly used to support sustainability principles in decision making with this reference to the genuine progress indicator.

Mr. Moorman said they took out alternative ways.

Ms. Pombar said in target 2(a)(3) it seems in other areas models like that are referenced. There is a footnote that explains it.

Mr. Bloch said he is a little disturbed about singling ESOPS because the research that has gone on for the last 20 years shows they aren't the golden goose they have been promoted to be. He wouldn't use them as a reference point. It suggests ways to look at the world when you grind the lens to this specification.

Ms. Hallman said with regard to Goal C and Meaningful Work....

Mr. Moorman said he thinks the Planning Commission would like to move it to the end. Instead of Goal C make it Goal F.

Ms. Hallsmith said the title here has a long evolution although not necessarily here in Montpelier. Here in Montpelier there was a shorter evolution. There used to be two goals. One was employment and one was meaningful work. The evolution of meaningful work comes from the human needs framework that in fact our economic needs are pretty narrowly defined when you think about what we need as human beings for the economy to give us. We need money. The economy provides us with a level of income and in our system having income of various sorts is important to living fulfilling lives. We also need work. We need to make a contribution to our communities. She doesn't think anybody but pathological sociopaths would tend to disagree with that, that most people like to contribute to the communities in a meaningful way. It really comes from that sense of contribution. Rather than just having a goal that talks about any old hamburger flipping job that we could bring into the community that would give people income this goal really does focus on jobs that are high quality jobs that provide a sense of meaning to people that are engaged in them and not just as a way of earning money but having a way to contribute to the community.

Ms. Aloisi asked how does this improve their skills and advance them to new challenges.

Mr. Bloch said that may be one person's vision. In the old Lobster Pot there was a waitress that had been there for 35 years who was a pillar of this community and it was damned important for her to work the circuit. She wasn't trying to become the manager of the restaurant.

Ms. Aloisi said it is important to note that it says residents have opportunities to improve their skills and advance so it isn't like we are asking them to change to a higher up position. It just means they have the chance if they would like to advance or move to a different type of work.

Mr. Bloch said they may use work in a different way. They may advance their skills outside of the work regime. They may paint some very lovely pictures which have nothing to do with the work they do, and they aren't concerned about it. They are concerned about having a decent enough income that they can afford to paint the pictures and have the free time.

Ms. Hallsmith said they address that under all of the other goals. Income is an important one. We have talked about livable wage and human needs, but this one really is about the need to have meaningful work. Not to have just any old job but to have a meaningful way of spending our time and contributing to the community. That is an economic goal.

Mr. Bloch said everybody is different. We're all unique. We then choose to make very different decisions about how we see things.

Mr. Borgendale said in particular 2(b) is rather elitist. All those things on this list are things he requires to do for meaningful work, but that doesn't mean that everyone on earth needs or wants those things. He thinks that is where we are getting into trouble here.

Mr. Goldman said it is hard to define somebody's happiness and meaningful work.

Ms. Hallsmith said they aren't trying to define it. We're just saying they are reporting they have it. She thinks there is a difference between employment and income earning tasks and work in general, and that is part of what this is getting at. Work in general is actually something else. You don't necessarily need to earn income in the kind of work we are talking about here. We are trying to give people opportunities in the community to contribute and contribute in a way that is meaningful for them. We are recognizing it as a legitimate human need.

Mr. Bloch said he makes a division of making a living and making a life. He doesn't think City Council can design making a life.

Ms. Hallsmith said City Council isn't necessarily responsible for seeing through all of these tasks. This is a community plan. Wait until we get to spirituality. City Council isn't going to have anything to do with that but it is still going to be in the plan.

Mr. Bloch said all of the studies that have been done about youth in Vermont for the last 30 years have showed they are the least religious in the United States.

Mr. James said meaningful work for the individual and not how the definition of meaningful work relates to the employer. Is that correct?

Ms. Hallsmith replied that is what human need is met by our economic activity and some of the work we do for our community.

Mr. James asked if there was a segment about what meaningful work means to the employer to allow the employer to have a sustainable business in the city.

Ms. Hallsmith said there are other goals and strategies here that address the needs of the employers. This is really about the needs of the individual.

Mr. James said he heard something about dishwashing. Maybe to the individual it is a life support system temporarily, but it is vital to the food industry. He wants folks to understand that when this goes before the Council it also includes some concern about what is meaningful work in terms of meaningful work for the employer.

Ms. Hallsmith said when we talk about how the employment clusters feel supported that is where we are talking about how do we help match the skills in the community with the needs of the employers, how do we help them make sure they have the workforce they need. Most of the time when we are talking about economic development we are talking about what we can do for the economy and not what the economy does for us as human beings. This is and the human needs section are the two lone places where we are trying to ask the other question. What does the economy do for us as humans? Not necessarily how many more ways can we bend over backwards to support whatever the local employers are and what their needs are but how does it serve us as individuals, as human beings, as residents of the city. Part of the way it serves us is by providing us with meaningful ways to contribute to the community and income. Those are two of the human needs that are met by economic activity. Then, in return the city and all of the individuals here help support the economic entities by providing them with a workforce and the investment and infrastructure they need to do a good job. It's a two way street, though.

Mr. James said it is only as good as the contribution made by the individual.

Ms. Aloisi said the goal in the beginning is all about ways to improve your skills in traditional jobs. There is the work and then the outside of work which are meaningful.

Mr. Bloch said if we have responded to our work the way other western industrial nations have we would have free education through college so you wouldn't have these artificial barriers to people gaining skills. It is atrocious what we do with education. It is access to gaining those skills and their technical schools are run totally independent of the industries.

Ms. Pombar said the term work in this statement refers to nonpaid also.

Ms. Hallsmith replied not necessarily, but it could.

Ms. Pombar said she sees that in strategy 2(c) and in other ways. She wonders if it would serve to elaborate upon that because it then says employment in the next sentence of the goal. It says work which has a broader meaning and then narrows it down into employment which refers to paid work. If there are two divergent concepts in that one paragraph then we just need to clarify what we are talking about and make it consistent throughout the statement. She doesn't see how Target 1 fits in here.

Ms. Hallsmith said maybe that would fit better in human needs, which is the next section. There used to be a section on work and section on employment and they glued them together.

Mr. Moorman said what if they just call it meaningful work and employment. Would that resolve this?

Ms. Pombar said the date on Target 3 seems really far out. It seems we have an increasingly aging population and the baby boomers aging up into the elderly category that 2040 may be too far away. We may want to think about prioritizing the work under that goal. Some of the dates have been set in response to the surveys which have not been the most elderly accessible tool because it is online or at meetings that elders may not attend.

Ms. Hallsmith asked if they would like to make it 2020.

Ms. Pombar replied that seems consistent with our population demographic to look at that earlier rather than later.

Mr. Bloch said in Target 3 he thinks their percentage is way off. He thinks if they get in the high 40's they are going well. It is sad about what happened to these folks as they got to be seniors and the kinds of skills and opportunities that were afforded to them, and that is why he goes back to the free education issue.

Ms. Pombar asked if there was a baseline measure for this.

Ms. Hallsmith said this should definitely be part of the survey.

Mr. James asked what their definition of "elder" is.

Ms. Pombar said she believed 65 and older would be consider elder.

Ms. Hallsmith said they can join AARP at age 50.

Mr. Borgendale said that is a real issue because 65 were set as retirement back in the 1930's and 1940's and being 65 today is a whole different matter from being 65 back in the 30's.

Mr. Moorman said especially when the retirement funds tank.

Mr. James said there is an economic issue here, and the economic issue is in the word over qualified. The news reports today about folks that are looking for jobs and being described as over qualified because they have credentials that are greater than what the job needs. That is a fallacy. If in fact a person wants to work at anything and they are going to be fulfilled the word over qualified pertains to a skill that they are willing to use and over qualified should not be used. Neither should the word elderly. It should be anybody.

Mr. Moorman said he has always read elders under the strategy 3(a) saying retired seniors and he assumed this was focusing on retired persons. We should change the reference in strategy 3(a) to retirees instead of retired seniors.

Ms. Hallsmith said for Target 4 they don't have the baseline for. They can increase them and also measure them.

Mr. Bloch said he isn't sure a creative economy always leads to well compensated.

Ms. Hallsmith said they are saying they want to be well compensated here. There is a fallacy about the creative economy that it is the poets and artists and highly creative and generally poor until they die and are famous. The creative economy includes a whole variety of other workers. It's the web designers, engineers, architects, marketing specialists; there are a lot of jobs in the creative economy that we actually have had growth in Montpelier that are very well compensated. We want those high paid jobs that are creative and productive. We'd love to give our artists high paid work and some of the new jobs in the creative economy are a way to do that.

Mr. Borgendale said a term that is often times used is knowledge based.

Ms. Hallsmith said it could be used as a modifier rather than a replacement – a creative knowledge based economy.

Mr. Borgendale said knowledge based is work that is based on thinking as opposed to doing something necessarily physical.

Ms. Hallsmith said by 2020 jobs in the creative, knowledge based economy increase which is high quality well compensated positions.

Ms. Pombar said she is struggling with knowledge based. Are we then excluding painters that are maybe self taught but extremely creative?

Mr. Borgendale replied not at all. When they say knowledge based they are not assuming how the knowledge was attained. He isn't talking about formal education when he is talking about knowledge based. That is oftentimes assumed but not always true.

Ms. Hallsmith said they haven't looked at the human needs section at all and vibrant downtowns.

Mr. James said in Target 5 when they use word "youth" were you presupposing that the word youth refers to people who are governed by child labor laws. We don't want to leave it open.

Ms. Hallsmith said it doesn't have to be narrowed down to youth. It could be for young people and also people looking for new jobs or new careers.

Moving on to entrepreneurial opportunities, there are a couple of changes made from the input from the Planning Commission the last meeting. One was how to measure the ventures and another in strategy 1(b) there was a question that needed to be answered. How do we link housing growth to entrepreneurial growth? This is just looking at national trends for people starting up entrepreneurial enterprises in their homes. That is often where new entrepreneurial ventures begin. It follows that if people are building offices and little entrepreneurial ventures in their homes that if we had more homes we might have more ventures. The job creation that comes with home construction is another piece of that. This is really about the new kinds of workers that are working in their homes instead. A lot of the creative economy is in peoples' homes.

Mr. Goldman said a lot of that is driven because there is no choice.

Ms. Hallsmith said you typically grow into incubator space out of your house.

Ms. Aloisi said this is difficult because of the 60 new housing units per year. Montpelier can only grow so much, and how much do we want it to grow and where do we want it to grow in terms of housing?

Ms. Hallsmith said 60 is the current target for the next 20 years. The 60 units can be in the housing section. It doesn't need to be here.

Moving to human needs and vibrant downtowns

Ms. Pombar asked if we knew how many people are currently within or below at the level of poverty.

Ms. Hallsmith said they do know that. It would be in the census data.

Ms. Pombar said her question about who is living below the level of poverty was just not whether that information was accessible but whether 25 percent was realistic for a goal that not only was doable but high enough. If we have a lot of people living below 200 percent poverty she would want to make sure that most of them would be out of that by 2015.

Ms. Hallsmith added they might want to make the target a little longer. We should be working towards eradicating poverty.

Mr. Borgendale said this gets at expressing goals where the measurement is a percentage and the objective is a percentage. If the percentage is 10 percent, then it goes to 7.5 percent, or does it mean it will go to minus 15 percent.

Ms. Hallsmith said say they have 200 residents living below 100 percent of poverty this says that decreases by 50. It is a percentage decrease in the number of people living below poverty. It should say number of residents and not percentage.

Mr. Moorman asked about taking out "perpetuate poverty."

Ms. Pombar said it makes an assumption that people who are unemployed or low income have competence issues. If you take out competence it makes sense.

Mr. Borgendale said it is pretty well established that there are certain basic life skills that are necessary to hold a job down.

Ms. Hallsmith said they could move the life skills part into this section.

Mr. Bloch said the issue about certain basic life skills, what gripes him is that we never transfer what we know. Where do we measure those skills are acquired and what is the threshold to acquire them? It goes back to our educational policies that we pay top dollar for. How do we keep manufacturing such a high proportion relative to the number in school that doesn't seem to have been able to get the life skills? There has to be a measurement somewhere. You spend good money and don't get what you pay for.

Ms. Hallsmith said there is actually a whole educational section. Showing up on time is an important vocational skill. They are talking about defining and measuring life skills required to participate and engage. That is strategy 1(b) under Target 1 from Goal C which we now have moved to the section.

Mr. Moorman said he had a question about Target 2 under Goal E under Human Needs says total family income increases by 50 percent. They talked about this at the Steering Committee. Ms. Hallsmith said the percentage isn't there any longer. The idea is that incomes are going to increase and costs are going to be more stable or decrease in relation to the income. There will be more wealth in relation to costs because it is not just enough to increase your income if all of the costs and expenses keep skyrocketing.

Mr. Moorman asked what is meant by other economic inputs.

Ms. Hallsmith replied there could be other sources such as the Onion River Exchange where there are other means of exchanging goods and services besides just cash. The Onion River Exchange is tax exempt because it is all based in time and everybody's time is worth the same so it effectively takes it out of the market system and the IRS considers

that voluntary time. The Burlington Bread currency that was circulating in Burlington was taxable just like dollars are so you should have reported it on your income taxes.

Mr. James said livable wage policy is a lightning rod in the greater business community in the state. The Chamber of Commerce types look upon this as saying it is going to drive them to elimination. Businesses and social responsibility have more supporters for this kind of process. He would suggest that in develop educational programs to inform businesses and consumers for the benefits of a livable wage policy. Then, 1(b.2) examine how a livable wage policy might increase business productivity which would give a support mechanism to the business community that there is a benefit from this. That might diminish the political opposition to this.

Mr. Bloch said the same argument was used when they raised the minimum wage. Only what they projected didn't happen; the reverse happened. When they put in a higher minimum wage they actually had more consumers spending and the economy was benefitted by it. We have one of the highest minimum wages in the country. He thinks one of the reasons they have not suffered as they did in Las Vegas is they had a relatively stable income level for people that were doing nonunion jobs. There was stability in consumer spending. It didn't go up, but it didn't go down into the cellar, either. That was true in the late 1980's when we went through this little waltz. Vermont was like an island. What is it we do here that seems to be a shock absorber, and how can we make it more effective? These gloom and doom prognostications by the Chamber of Commerce, both state and federal, is like chicken little running around saying the sky is falling, and it doesn't fall here. He would like to see some good economic analysis done. This city adopted a livable wage policy in 1995 or 1996, and recently when the city took over the Senior Center they raised the cook's wages and the janitor's wages by 25 percent.

Ms. Hallsmith said she thinks Norm's suggestion for a strategy to examine how a livable wage policy can increase business productivity is a good suggestion.

Mr. Moorman said he thinks footnote 10 is a little redundant to say it may include reductions in turnover and also increase attraction and retention. He would suggest they get rid of turnover in the first sentence and leave increases retention in the second sentence.

Vibrant Downtowns –

Ms. Pombar said her first concern is that the Barre area is included in the goal language and if this is going to be our Master Plan she doesn't know how they could be responsible for the Barre area.

Ms. Hallsmith said that was an important point on the committee, the recognition that we are a part of a region. Even though it is Montpelier's Master Plan it is important. For example, last year when Home Depot was proposed here and there was an outcry against Home Depot arguably the Barre downtown would be harmed by that as well. So if our Master Plan reflects a commitment to vibrant downtowns in a couple different places instead of just our own that gives us more to speak about that kind of development that is going to harm even a neighboring downtown. It could be that there would be a big business proposed that wouldn't hurt any of our stores but would hurt Barre's, and Montpelier could intervene in that just as well. This also points out that the recognition that we are a region.

Mr. Borgendale said he thinks the idea that something that benefits the communities in a region is going to be beneficial to Montpelier, that they shouldn't be fighting each other.

Mr. James said the committee said it is an economic fact of life that Barre, Berlin and Montpelier are linked. Whether they want to join us and come along on our train ride, that's up to them. The committee was very serious about this. We can't be self sufficient because there are just too many circumstances so we bring in the other communities around us.

Ms. Hallsmith said by us making sure we expressly articulates our neighboring communities in our Master Plan we are taking a leadership role.

Ms. Aloisi said in strategy 1 (a) what about landowners who keep their properties vacant. Is there a way to tax them if they do not seek a means to revitalize or rent a space?

Ms. Hallsmith said they drafted a vacant buildings ordinance. Vacant building ordinances typically address widespread vacancies that are becoming health and neighborhood hazards. When you read where our police power comes in it doesn't really deal very well with Aubuchon who has a building they are leaving vacant for lack of renovation funds. There is nothing necessarily unsafe about that and it is not attracting vagrants or an eyesore. Our police power stops somewhat short of penalizing landlords for parts of buildings that are vacant. Our police power would extend to dealing with vacant buildings that are both unsafe and unsecured. When you look at vacant building ordinances that are passed all over the country we can be thankful that we don't need one here because there are certainly cities that need them where there are buildings being boarded up and whole neighborhoods going under vacancies that are real trouble and hard to keep from becoming crack houses and flop houses. We don't have that problem. You can't pass an ordinance that tries to get some of our local downtown landlords to rent their space more quickly than they do.

Ms. Pombar said there is nothing they can do around the persistent vacant storefronts in Montpelier. Other parts of the building may be occupied.

Mr. Bloch said another strategy is to reverse the way we assess property tax. If you make an improvement in a building we say it is worth more so their taxes are going up. We could say they are depreciating the value intentionally and their tax goes up. That has been used in certain cities where they had commercial zones. You encourage people to make an investment by building an incentive in. We do the reverse in our tax policy.

Ms. Hallsmith said vacant building ordinances are based on police power, and public health and safety is the bottom line.

Mr. James said they talked about vacancies and talked the coop issue of small businesses making a coop in an empty space by dividing it with cubicles. At least they would have a small incubator space for small businesses to get together and have a common area.

Ms. Aloisi said there are vacant lots in town that could be developed which haven't been. Montpelier has been struggling with this issue for a long time.

Ms. Hallsmith said there is the carrot and there is the stick and you get more with the carrot than you do with the stick in these situations. The stick is the vacant building ordinances and penalties for vacancies. With a carrot we have introduced this growth center designation and looking at tax increment financing and other types of incentives to get people to do things in the growth center. They are trying to achieve having a long term vibrant downtown that has many locally owned businesses that offers goods and services that are full and make Montpelier an interesting place to be. Her sense from all of the studying she has gone on the issue is that even though it appears that we have vacancies in the downtown we actually have a fairly healthy vacancy rate in the retail level. There is not an over abundance of them. Most of the places you see right now that are vacant have a number of suitors that are looking into locating there. It helps keep things interesting in the downtown to have turnover and it helps keep the opportunity available for new businesses to open up if you have small storefronts that are available for rent. We really don't have a problem with having too many of them yet. Right now the vacancy rate is a healthy one and not alarming. Onion River Exchange is looking for storefront space and there isn't that much available. You can do urban renewal a program where you take property and renovate it, but that actually requires a lot of public financing. They have been talking about redeveloping the Carr Lot for 10 years.

Mr. Moorman said he likes 2(a)(2) but not the second sentence because he feels it is very restrictive. We want to develop a coupon for local businesses, and it may make sense to distribute them beyond our downtown area and make them available in places in Burlington. You could get rid of the second sentence all together.

Ms. Hallsmith said it would read provide information to local building and business owners on programs and funding available for energy efficiency and other improvements.

Mr. James said under strategy 2(c) he thinks they are forgetting the 800 pound gorilla in this city. We should make the state government an attraction. We are the seat of state government. Public policy making for the whole state of Vermont comes from here. There should be some kind of incentive here to have people come to Montpelier to go visit the Legislature. We should be able to bring the folks in and create as a government destination visiting place.

Ms. Hallsmith said promote state government as a tourist attraction.

Ms. Pombar said she thinks that is embedded in 2(c)(2).

Ms. Hallsmith said the plan is not done yet. It is just achieving higher and better quality drafts each time they go through and make the changes. She is mindful of the fact they need to get it done by July. The next step for the Planning Commission is to discuss governance.

**Other Business:**

None.

**Adjournment:**

Upon motion by Mr. Borgendale and Ms. Aloisi the Planning Commission adjourned at 9:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted

Gwen Hallsmith, Director  
Planning and Community Development