

**Montpelier Planning Commission**  
**June 8, 2009**  
**City Council Chambers, City Hall**

*Subject to Review and Approval*

**Present:** David Borgendale, Vice Chair; Alan Goldman, Jesse Moorman, Lucia Bragg, and Karen Vogan, Chair, via phone.  
Staff: Gwen Hallsmith, Director, Planning and Community Development.

**Call to Order:**

The June 8, 2009 Montpelier Planning Commission was called to order by phone by Karen Vogan, Chair, at 7:00 P.M.

**Review of Minutes:**

The April 13<sup>th</sup> Minutes were approved as printed. The March 23<sup>rd</sup> Minutes were approved with a minor correction on page 2 of the Minutes.

**Sabin's Pasture Act 250 Letter:**

The Trust for Public Lands will present the plans they have submitted to Act 250 and ask the Planning Commission to issue a letter finding that the plans are consistent with the city's Master Plan. Roger Krussman gave an overview of the Sabin's Pasture development to date. He described the findings of the working group as well as the guiding principles such as impact on views and number of units.

The Trust for Public Lands hired a consultant to prepare an Act 250 Master Plan application. There are slight changes from the working group's recommendations. All of the plans are on the city's web site open, public and accessible to all. Criteria 10 of the Master Plan demonstrate that the project conforms to the local and regional plans. Mr. Borgendale reported that the Regional Planning Commission has sent a letter to the Act 250 Commission that the project conforms with the regional plan as well.

Mr. Moorman asked a question about pedestrian facilities. Mr. Krussman reported there will be a sidewalk along the edge of Barre Street and along the interior streets of development. Ms. Hallsmith inquired if there would be sidewalks between the development and downtown. Mr. Krussman reported they hope that the bike path will serve as pedestrian access into town. This is more of a conceptual design at this point and not a final plan. When the developer comes back for actual permits there will be more detail.

Mr. Borgendale inquired how many housing units there would be and how much commercial development. Mr. Krussman reported there would be 145 housing units and 8,000 square feet of commercial space. Mr. Krussman said 175 to 225 units was the recommendation of the working group. Feedback from the city and a market study led to a lower number of housing units.

Mr. Borgendale inquired what the mix of the housing units was. It was reported there are going to be three multi-family units. One has 18 apartments and one has 24. There will be a total of 66 housing units in multi-family units. There are 54 single family units with 0 lot lines and another 25 units with ¼ acre lots, plus some square footage in area A.

Mr. Goldman asked if the commercial buildings were going to be mixed use. Mr. Krussman said there would be office space, retail and convenience space, all things that would serve the neighborhood.

Mr. Borgendale asked if the commercial space will be ground level and sidewalk accessible.

Mr. Krussman said because of the right-of-way for the bike path it meant we couldn't build on Barre Street if we left the bike path where it is. For the bigger picture the combination of this with 80 acres of open space means that this side of town will be better served by a park within walking distance.

Mr. Borgendale asked if the area of the southeast is not buildable. Mr. Krussman replied that was correct because the ledge makes it difficult. It is very steep there.

Mr. Moorman inquired if there were conceptual stages to the project.

Mr. Krussman said the Trust for Public Land's goal is to obtain an Act 250 Master Plan permit that would identify the split of developed versus open space and the number of units to be developed on the property. Then, they can market it to a developer and convey there are certain outstanding issues but with more certainty than now. There are still a lot of details to be worked out 80/20 and 145 units.

Ms. Bragg asked if there was a guaranteed that it would be conserved.

Mr. Krussman reported the Trust for Public Lands hopes the City Council will accept ownership of conserved land as a city park. They can't talk about the conserved land without talking about the new neighborhood being developed. Their contract is to buy all of the land.

Ms. Bragg asked if the city would purchase the land.

Mr. Krussman said a developer might buy 20 acres and city 80 acres. An interim owner might be possible in the meantime.

Mr. Moorman said the Planning Commission should add language about pedestrian access. Criterion 5 deals with traffic. We should add language about bike paths and sidewalks.

Mr. Krussman said the goal was to protect views from up above. The housing and density was pushed toward Barre Street. The upper level development was a compromise. Mr. Borgendale said from Barre Street it will look like an urban landscape. Mr. Krussman replied that was how it was designed.

Mr. Goldman said he had a question about traffic concerning the Barre and Main Street intersection.

Mr. Krussman said there are several intersections. Barre & Main is a level F. How do you make it much worse? Granite Street Bridge and Sibley Avenue are all compromised. The Traffic Study Committee recommended a turning lane onto Main Street. More lanes and stop signs were also recommended.

Ms. Vogan asked if the housing units were addressing affordability.

Mr. Krussman said the Act 250 Master Plan does not address it, but the working group has recommended 25 percent of the housing units would be for affordable housing.

Mr. Goldman asked what model would protect the open land. Would the city protect the land?

Mr. Krussman reported the Trust for Public Land's goal is to develop the park. They also believe that the community's goals of infill housing development would be addressed. Ideally, it will be permanently conserved. Mr. Goldman asked if the Trust for Public Land could help the city with money for the conserved land. Mr. Krussman replied it was their goal to help the city find a way to finance the plan.

Ms. Bragg asked if the housing and conservation were linked. Mr. Krussman said the Trust for Public Lands said their position is that they go together. The working group made it clear that they need to go together. They have a grant from the Vermont Housing Conservation Board until they are both moving forward.

Mr. Borgendale asked if the Master Plan maintains that breakdown what happens if they want to change it. Ms. Bragg asked what a developer would have to do to change it. Would they have to go through Act 250?

Mr. Krussman said they have asked for findings on 20 out of 24 criteria and sub-criteria, and at some point they will have the findings. That way the developer can go back for only the ones they don't address.

Mr. Moorman asked if there was anything that required to the development to be energy efficient. Mr. Krussman explained that this is a south facing slope. The working group encouraged building the project to maximize solar and energy efficiency. It is found in criteria 9(f).

Ms. Hallsmith reviewed the existing letter from the Planning Department to the Trust for Public Lands. It was suggested that language about sidewalks connecting to the existing pedestrian network be added.

Mr. Goldman questioned the undue impact on ridgelines and hillsides. Ms. Hallsmith said there is language in the plan that talks about controlling future development on hillsides and ridgelines. He said it would help to have a better visual analysis of the impact on hillsides and ridgelines. He also questioned the impact on the city's schools and if there would be a school impact fee.

Mr. Krussman replied there is currently excess capacity in schools, water and sewer. They would need a 16 inch sewer pipe to serve this development. There might be a way to deliver the sidewalks. They haven't looked at the elementary school class sizes yet.

Mr. Goldman asked how many students. What is the capacity? Are the water lines adequate? The city requires that buildings be sprinklered. The city's lines are inadequate. Will the development need to improve the water lines?

Mr. Krussman said in the Act 250 Master Plan they project a total of 61 children with a positive impact on school enrollment. Regarding water, sewer, fire and road maintenance a municipal impact questionnaire was sent out and it isn't clear if the answers have been returned.

Mr. Moorman asked if the town plan requires additional pedestrian circulation.

Ms. Vogan moved that a new letter be drafted that included sidewalks and streets. Mr. Moorman seconded the motion.

Mr. Goldman asked how the information would be circulated. Mr. Krussman said they would be happy to come back to meet with the Planning Commission members.

The motion passed on a vote of 5 to 0.

Ms. Hallsmith provided brief project updates on other items the Planning Department is working on.

Upon motion to adjourn by Mr. Moorman and Ms. Vogan, the Planning Commission meeting adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen Hallsmith, Director  
Planning and Community Development