

Montpelier Planning Commission Meeting January 27, 2020

Subject to review and approval

This public meeting was recorded, and the video will be available for viewing at this link:
<https://www.montpelier-vt.org/1094/CivicClerk>

Present: Barbara Conrey, Stephanie Smith, Kirby Keeton, John Adams, Marcella Dent, Michael Miller.

Absent: Ariane Kissam, Aaron Kisicki.

Call to order by the Chair: The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Kirby Keeton.

Approval of the agenda: John made a motion to approve the agenda as printed, Stephanie seconded. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote with no abstentions.

Comments from the Chair: There were no comments from the Chair.

General business (comments from the public about something not on the agenda): There were no comments from the public.

Consider minutes from January 13, 2020: Stephanie made a motion to approve the minutes as printed, John seconded. The motion passed on a 4-0 vote with Barb abstaining since she was present at that meeting.

Public hearing on the Design Review regulations:

Presentation – the meeting was turned over to Mike and Meredith. A consultant was hired to help write the new regulations. The idea was to offer some consistency with the application of the rules, even with new board members. The plan was to make more administrative approval and transparent guidelines.

The core changes come down to standards for alterations for historic buildings as one group and non-historic buildings as another group, then some rules that cover all applications. The exemptions for design review were increased.

Public comment – Nora Rose Abbott spoke first. She doesn't feel that subdivision of land should be exempt from design review. It will be reviewed as a development review. Ms. Abbott also questioned the need to redo the maps so frequently.

Tim Heney was next. He acknowledged that the process is much easier now than it used to be, but it worries that it might still be too strict.

Lindy Biggs spoke about renovating her house, which isn't historic but it might look that way after the renovations she wants to do.

Eric Gilbertson, from the Historic Preservation Commission and Design Review. He recommended that Ms. Biggs attend a meeting to review her project if she has concerns.

Mike had some comments from people who were not able to attend the meeting. One was from Karen Schwartz from Terrace Street. Her concern was that her property and two other properties were not historic. Her property and the others had already been removed.

Justin and Jess Barnard contacted Mike from the Bailey Avenue area. They felt that the regulations that would apply to their property under the new rules would be onerous and burdensome. Mike will get the comments out to Commissioners to discuss.

Mike got an email from someone else who wants to comment but doesn't have anything ready at this time. Stephanie Pinard is part of the condos at Franklin Square. The changes were explained to her and she felt more comfortable with them then.

Jon Anderson wanted to check that his properties on East State Street were not part of the proposed changes. He stated that he feels that the changes make it more difficult to change old windows.

Ruth Hare commented that she attended the changes meeting in 2016. She stated that a little bit more leeway on energy efficiency changes, including solar panels. Eric said the Historic Conservation Committee should revisit the solar panel issue.

Dick Smith is the chairman of the trustees of the United Methodist Church at 137 Main Street. He wanted to attend to learn more about historic buildings.

Anyone who is watching can still ask questions of Mike. The hearing will close. Formal decisions will be made on February 10.

Eric wanted to thank Mike and Meredith and the Planning Commission for their work. Kirby thanked the Historic Preservation Commission for doing the lion's share of the work.

Adjournment: Barbara made a motion to adjourn, Marcella seconded.

Respectfully submitted,

Tami Furry
Recording Secretary