

Fair Haven Planning Commission
Town of Fair Haven - November 1, 2023 - Regular Meeting

Commissioners Present: Robert Richards - Chair, Cindy Pritchard - vice chair, Linda Sienkiewicz - Clerk, Lorraine Brown, Jason Coupal

Commissioners Absent: Patrick Frazier

Others Present: Phil Adams - Zoning Administrator, Jennifer Jackson - minute-taker, Neil Robinson

Agenda

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Richards called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2. **New Business:**

a. **Revised Fair Haven Zoning Regulations presented to the Fair Haven Select Board.**
Chairman Richards explained that he and Mrs. Pritchard presented the updated Zoning Regulations with the mandatory regulations to the Select Board on Tuesday October 31, 2023. Mr. Richards explained that the Select Board is now looking them over and will hold a public hearing. They are hoping to adopt the regulations on December 12th and hold the public hearing at a date afterwards.

ZA Adams stated there was a portion of the updated zoning regulations that were supposed to be submitted to the State Commission of Commerce but this submission deadline was unintentionally overlooked. ZA Adams is getting assistance on how to handle the situation.

b. **Neil Robinson - Requested discussion of the Fair Haven Town Plan update (15 minutes)**

Mr. Robinson spoke to the Planning Commission about the importance of using the dam Fair Haven owns to generate hydroelectric power. He quoted from the book Shorting the Grid: The hidden fragility of our electric grid by Meredith Angwin (<https://www.meredithangwin.com/books/>) to help support his argument. Fair Haven is one of only two Vermont municipalities that owns their own dam. He believes that Fair Haven could make money by producing hydroelectric power and selling it back to the grid. There have already been studies conducted and presented to the town on how to implement hydroelectric productivity.

Mrs. Brown asked how his presentation pertains to the Town Plan. Mr. Robinson stated that hydroelectric power is included in the plan. Mrs. Brown asked Mr. Robinson to look at the goals in the Town Plan and tell the Planning Commission what you'd like their help with. Mr. Robinson stated that there is a meeting on November 14th in Rutland with the Agency of Natural Resources with the focus of getting green energy into our area. Fair Haven has a lot going for it and he'd like to see some group in the town government push for hydroelectric energy production. Chair Richards explained that the PC is very interested in having Mr. Robinson's input and expertise when they are working on the hydroelectric goal on page 21. Mr. Robinson asked what the obstacles were with the town in implementing hydroelectric production. Chair Richards explained that cost was a factor and that it would need to be brought to the

selectboard. Mr. Coupal asked how far the concept had gone in the past. Chair Richards explained that it had been taken to a feasibility study. Mr. Robinson explained that Green Mountain Power has changed their approach to renewable energy production since the last study.

Mr. Robinson left the meeting at 7:29 pm with the plan to help create the hydroelectric section of the Town Plan's goals.

c. Continue work on the Fair Haven Town Plan update.

The Planning Commission stopped at page 16 of the Town Plan at the last meeting. The update started with Mrs. Brown passing out a handout where she had collected a list of Fair Haven's Civic Organizations, Volunteer organizations and Clubs, and Historic Sites. It was noted that the Eagles club was left off the list and that the Eureka Lodge was written down twice. Mrs. Brown also handed out a history section collected by a historian that she would like the PC to look over.

Chairman Richards explained that Water and Sewer are on their section and will have something for the PC soon. Mrs. Sienkiewicz stated that she is ready to start the editing process as soon as they are able to allow her to begin. She also stated that gathering demographic and population information was easy, but she ran into trouble when looking for information on housing and renters and was having difficulty finding the other statistics that were asked of her to obtain. It was suggested that she contact Mr. Solomon to ask for assistance as he offered when he was in attendance. Mr. Coupal informed that the State is now having a few issues with the interpretation of Vermont's pre-colonial culture, he suggested that maybe the document "The Historical Architecture of Rutland County - Fair Haven" may have a biased interpretation of the cultural history of the town. He suggested that the PC listen to the podcast from Brave Little State about native cultures in Vermont titled "Recognised"

(<https://www.vermontpublic.org/podcast/brave-little-state/2023-10-19/vermont-recognized-tribes-canada-abenaki-first-nations-odanak-wolinak>)

- Page 16
 - Mrs. Pritchard asked if the water people are also doing an air quality section, as Mr. Solomon stated it needed to be included in the final version. The September 20th addendum asked the PC to add something along the lines of " Fair Haven's tree canopy is a valuable asset, providing shade, helping filter out air pollution particles, and sequestering carbon."
- Page 17
 - Mrs. Brown stated that the parks section had been added in with the history section. She asked if the Recreation department was too new to be charged with the section's write-up. Chair Richards stated he would ask for their input on what is already there.
 - Add dog park in Airport section
 - Pickleball at school playground? Mr. Richards will ask TM Gunter.
- Page 18/19

- Mrs. Brown stated that much of this information had also been included in the history section. She will bring the last section to the next meeting for discussion.
- Page 20
 - Revise to be less pessimistic.
 - Specifically in Energy section 1st paragraph second sentence and second paragraph last sentence
 - Expand on energy use. Use Energy Burden Report from Efficiency VT (<https://www.efficiencyvermont.com/news-blog/whitepapers/vermonts-2023-energy-burden-report>)
- Page 21
 - Revise hydroelectric paragraph
 - Geothermal needs to either be removed or revised. Mr. Richards will investigate feasibility in Vermont.
 - Remove Biomass as funding source isn't available anymore
 - Revise Wood section
 - The Solar and Wind section needs to be rewritten because of the new Solar project at the end of Airport road on Sheldon property.
- Page 22
 - Rewrite the top paragraph to be more inclusive.
 - Update Transportation section.
- Page 23
 - New Park and Ride being added.
 - Air Park needs revision because of the negative tone. Maybe it should be moved to the recreation section.
 - Remove the overall negative tone.
 - Road Classes - Mrs. Sienkiewicz will check with TM Gunter.
- Page 24
 - Traffic Patterns – revise
 - 4th Street signs will change patterns
 - Bridges - Revise with what is left.
 - Sidewalks - revise. Last sentence should be a goal.

3. Review of Minutes of Previous Meeting:

a. Approval of Minutes:

i. Regular Meeting - September 20th, 2023

Mrs. Brown motioned to approve the minutes of September 20, 2023 with the addendum from RRPC and Mr. Solomon. The motion was seconded by Mr. Coupal. All were in favor and the motion passed.

ii. Regular Meeting - October 4, 2023

Mrs. Sienkiewicz motioned to approve the minutes of October 4, 2023 as written. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Brown. Mr. Coupal abstained from voting as he missed the meeting. All others were in favor and the motion passed.

iii. Regular Meeting - October 18, 2023 canceled due to lack of quorum

4. Other Business:

- a. **Review of Mail: None**
- b. **Public Comment: None**

5. Adjournment:

Mrs. Sienkiewicz **motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 pm.** Mrs. Brown seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

**** Next Scheduled Regular Planning Commission Meeting is on November 15, 2023****

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Jackson, Minute-taker