



RUTLAND CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

City Hall – 52 Washington St. – Rutland, VT 05701
Mailing Address: P. O. Box 969 – Rutland, VT 05702
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Minutes April 10, 2019

Present: Susan Schreibman (SS), Larry Walter (LW), Alvin Figiel (AF) and Patrick Griffin (PG).

Absent: Dave Coppock (DC).

Also Present: Alderman Rebecca Mattis; Tara Kelly, Planning Director and Zoning Administrator; Marlene Allen and Philip Allen, both of Same Sun of Vermont; and Charlie Coughlin.

SS, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

- I. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS** – SS added an update of the Sign Ordinance under Old Business.
- II. PUBLIC COMMENT** – None.
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 27, 2019.**

LW moved to approve the minutes of February 27, 2019. AF seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. NEW BUSINESS – SAME SUN request for designation of “Preferred Site” for 360 West Street.

Marlene Allen discussed the evolution of Net Metering Rule 5.100 that governs siting of solar arrays to allow municipalities the opportunity to comment and support “preferred sites.” The notion of “preferred site” affects rates and credit on arrays up to 500kw therefore adjusting the incentive to get solar projects sited under favorable characteristics such as: rooftop, brownfields, landfills or undeveloped land where a property owner wants an array for personal or business use. The incentive includes an additional .01 cent per kilowatt for 10 years. In the case of Rutland, the municipality’s Board of Aldermen, Planning Commission and Regional Planning Commission must sign a joint letter specific to the clause in Rule 5.103 in order to designate a “preferred site.” Marlene read the proposed letter, addressed to the Public Utilities Commission. A copy is attached to these minutes.

SS reminded the Commission they had discussed the environmental impacts of the project at a previous meeting and had submitted a letter of support. However, that letter did not address the “preferred site” request.

Philip Allen discussed the Board of Aldermen's hesitation to sign the joint letter, taking the position that the abutters be notified. This has been done and included the City Planning Commission.

Marlene said there are two phases to receive a Certificate of Public Good. First is a 45 day notice with some information and opportunity for comment, followed by submission of a full application. Signing the joint letter will not preclude the Planning Commission from making additional comments on the application.

Discussion continued regarding who would benefit from the "preferred site" status. Philip explained it would be Mr. Coughlin's two McDonald's restaurants. He added that the 360 West Street location is zoned industrial and fits with the spirit of the rule.

AF asked if the City was allowed a limited number of preferred sites. The answer was no.

SS said the site is not affected by the proposed zoning.

AF moved to support designating 360 West Street as a "preferred site" and to allow SS to sign the joint letter on behalf of the City Planning Commission. LW seconded. Motion was approved.

Marlene explained that the next steps would be meeting again with the Aldermen and then the RRPC.

V. OLD BUSINESS – Update on Designations.

Tara said the most significant advantage to the Neighborhood designation would be the wastewater incentive. The City is not currently ready to take on the analysis necessary to pursue this designation. There was emphasis on the amount of work involved to achieve designation versus the benefits.

Sign Ordinance Update.

Alderman Mattis discussed the timeline for the Charter & Ordinance Committee's review of the proposed sign ordinance. She has asked for materials to help the Committee understand the need for a new ordinance; problems and issues; differences; and current sign measurements. She also plans to talk with Mary Cohen for input, as well as, Mike Gauthier. She anticipates that it will be a long process.

SS suggested holding some public meetings, a survey and encouraged transparency going forward.

PG asked how the Commission could help. Alderman Mattis suggested they encourage business owners to send their comments to the Board. She asked for a list of people who attended the previous public meeting. LW suggested posting the proposed sign ordinance to the City website.

Review Chapter 2 of Draft Zoning.

Tara distributed copies of Chapter 2, table of uses and definitions. The current district map and proposed map were displayed for the discussion. She said the zoning boundaries had been maintained between the two maps with no transfers; however the similar zoning districts were combined.

The following comments were discussed:

- A second SFR district will not be created at this time
- Historic Gateways include Main Street Park
- Architectural review should be maintained for all Gateway Districts
- “Alternative” transportation should be changed to “Active” transportation
- Building presentation should be “required” to face the street, not “encouraged.”
- Architectural Review should be mentioned in overlay district as opposed to in the general description
- Add definition for “Active” transportation
- Change Woodstock designation to GWB but allow gas stations as conditional use
- Contemplate including Grove St to Crescent St. in GW District instead of MR1.
- Consider PUD for Griswold property
- Correct zoning for Fairgrounds
- SI district replaces Neighborhood Business district
- Reconsider Education Park District due to CSJ’s closing.

Tara suggested that for the next meeting the Commission review the table of uses.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE.

The following correspondence was received and placed on file.

3/13/19, Federal Communications Commission, Section 106 filing for Verizon Wireless, 160 Allen Street, antenna tower structure.

Barbara was asked to forward copies of the Rutland Reader article regarding Tiny Houses and the Herald article on the sign ordinance to the Commission.

VII. ADJOURN.

PG moved to adjourn. The meeting ended at 7:02 pm. The next meeting will be held May 8.

For the Commission:

Barbara Spaulding, Recording Secretary