



RUTLAND CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

City Hall – 52 Washington St. – Rutland, VT 05701
Mailing Address: P. O. Box 969 – Rutland, VT 05702
Phone: 802-773-1800

Minutes January 29, 2020

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

Also Present: Joe Giancola; Tara Kelly, Planning Director and Zoning Administrator and Barbara Spaulding, recording secretary.

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

- I. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS** – SS suggested adding under New Business the request from Joe Giancola regarding a “preferred site” designation for a solar array at 171 River Street. DC so moved and LW seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- II. PUBLIC COMMENT** – None.
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 15, 2020.**

LW moved to approve the minutes of January 15, 2020. AF seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. NEW BUSINESS – Preferred Site request for 171 River Street solar array.

Joe Giancola said he has plans for two solar farms and has one existing. ANR has approved the building of the solar array at 171 River Street which is located in a floodplain provided the conditions in a letter dated 1/22/20 from John Broker-Campbell are met.

Joe explained that he is seeking the “preferred site” designation for a better kilowatt hour rate. He will be making the same request to the Board of Aldermen at their next meeting.

SS asked Joe how drainage will be dealt with considering the 171 River Street property is at a higher elevation than the Rutland Creek Path. She explained as part of the path development a ditch was created and a culvert installed to deal with runoff from adding the impervious surface.

Joe responded that he did not think runoff would be an issue due to the fact that the solar arrays would be on pylons. SS suggested including a condition on the “preferred site” status that the project engineer needs to address drainage and increased runoff onto the multi-use path.

PG suggested that the Commission adopt the draft Solar Siting Criteria & Issues for Consideration as presented by SS before making a motion on the 171 River Street project.

AF moved to approve the Solar Siting Criteria & Issues for Consideration as presented. DC seconded. There was discussion regarding the list of undesired sites. AF moved to amend the motion to remove “FEMA Floodways and Special Flood Hazard Areas” as undesired sites. DC seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

PG moved to recommend “preferred site” status for the solar array at 171 River Street based on the Solar Siting criteria and with the following conditions: satisfy ANR conditions in the letter dated Jan. 22, 2020 and to not add drainage issues on the adjacent site. DC seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

SS volunteered to draft a letter to Judith Whitney, Clerk at Vermont Public Utility Commission regarding the Commission’s motion. She will distribute the draft to the PC for comment.

City Bond Language:

“Shall the City of Rutland issue general obligation bonds or notes in an amount not to exceed Five Million Dollars (\$5,000,000), for the purpose of making public improvements, namely, reconstruction, repair, rehabilitation and reclamation of (1) City streets and highways at an estimated cost of Four Million Dollars (\$4,000,000), and (2) City sidewalks at an estimated cost of One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000)?”

PG asked the PC to advocate for open discussion of which streets and sidewalks would receive the \$5,000,000 in funding. AF agreed that for the sake of transparency a list of affected streets and sidewalks should be made available to the voters.

SS said that when she requested this information and was told it would be “political suicide” to make the information public. DC said there are other towns that make this information public knowledge and that, in his opinion, a schedule of proposed repairs is not a real threat to the bond vote.

The Commission discussed the need for a Capital Improvement Plan and SS said that a plan was initiated 10 years ago by Aldermen Wallstrom and Robinson but was never completed.

PG asked SS to draft a letter, on behalf of the Commission, to the Mayor and Aldermen strongly encouraging the street and sidewalk information be made public. SS agreed to draft a letter and circulate to the Commission for comment.

V. OLD BUSINESS – City Master Plan – Draft Update.

The Commission, using an overhead projector, continued their review of the draft picking up on page 53. They corrected typos, made clarifications and discussed highlighted sections.

Section 7: Education – The PC agreed to leave the Proposed Education Park section intact.

Section 8: Housing – There was discussion on how to include language to encourage diversity in housing types. Language was included in 8.7d and 8.10e. Tara said she would review and update 8.7c Permit Trends.

Section 9: Energy – DC and LW incorporated language applicable to Rutland that was recently adopted in Middlebury's master plan. Tara asked if there was language regarding reducing energy costs on city owned buildings and it appears in 2.3 and 2.4.

The Commission discussed 9.2 Natural Gas at length. The consensus was to edit the paragraph and see if there is any comment at the public hearing.

PG will format the accepted changes and send a final draft copy to Brennan and Barbara. Barbara will publish the public hearing notice and mail the required to copies to Rutland Town, RRPC and DHCD.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE – None.

VII. ADJOURN.

PG moved to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting ended at 7:05 pm. The next meeting will be held February 12, 2020.

For the Commission:

Barbara Spaulding, Recording Secretary