

**Johnson Planning Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**July 13, 2015**

Committee members in attendance: David Bergh, Paul Warden, Phil Wilson, David Butler, Kim Dunkley, David Grozinsky.

Other attendees: Lois Frey, Sue Lovering, Don Blais, Dianne Lehouillier, Steve Reber, Bob Schulz, Andrew Martin, Duncan Hastings, Gordy Smith, David Godette, Walter Pomroy, Doug Molde, Howard Romero, Scott Meyer, Charles Gallanter, Shannon Collins, Skip Vallee, Lea Kilvadyova

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David Butler called the meeting to order at 7:08.

*Review of minutes*

**David Bergh moved and Paul Warden seconded the motion to approve the June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015 minutes, pending the date change. All approved.**

*Unified plan: Review of Public Services and Community Services section*

The Planning Commission reviewed an updated version of the Public Services and Community Services chapter. In addition to the reviewed updates, David Grozinsky proposed to include a policy in the plan that would encourage Johnson to explore an approach similar to the one implemented by Green Mountain Power. As part of their business model, GMP now assists clients with retrofitting their homes with electric heat air pumps as well as other technologies in order to cut peoples' energy usage. Walter said that the legislature mandates this.

*Presentation of Maplefield's redevelopment project by Skip Vallee*

Skip Vallee presented preliminary plans for the redevelopment of the Mobil gas station site. The plans have not yet been submitted to the Act 250 Board; first, Skip wanted to obtain the community's input. Skip said that the original plan was to place the newly proposed building on the cemetery side of the lot and the pumps on the Studio Center side. After a discussion with the Studio Center, the plan was changed to reflect the Studio Center's suggestion to locate the building next to the Studio Center.

Skip said that the site will have ten pumps, three truck parking spaces, and the curb cuts will remain essentially the same as they are now. He also said that they recently redeveloped a site in Newport and since the location of the Newport site has similarities to the Johnson site, he would like to share pictures of the Newport's building. The Newport building is a two-story building with a lot of detail as opposed to a flatter building with a wraparound porch. The building has two stories because Newport has a zoning requirement that requires that buildings on Main Street be two-story. The second story of the Newport building is partly used and partly fake. The back part of the second story is used for offices but the street front side is fake. However, the building satisfies the façade requirement of the Newport zoning code.

Walter asked whether the Johnson building design allows for entering the building from the street front. Skip said that according to the current design one would have to walk around the building to enter. There are six parking spaces between the building and the street edge. David Grozinsky asked whether it would be at all possible to bring the building forward; all the way to the current sidewalk on the street. Walter said that instead of the parking places in front of the building, he would love to see a couple of umbrellas with picnic

tables for folks to enjoy creemees. Skip said that there is a lot of space at the back of the lot that may be great for that purpose.

Skip asked whether the community would prefer a one-story or a two-story building model. Lea and David Grozinsky said they prefer the Newport's two-story model. David Butler thought that everybody in the room would be very happy is Skip replicated the Newport building in Johnson. He said that we are trying to achieve a pedestrian friendly community with buildings placed in lot fronts, and in proximity to sidewalks and green spaces. Howard reiterated that he would like the new building brought up in line with all the other buildings. Skip responded that if the two-story building has an appeal, they could try to come up with a two story design which would however be less extravagant than the Newport building. Lea asked whether Skip would be willing to take a look at Johnson's proposed form based code standards. She said that the standards have not been adopted but represent a year-long citizen effort that went into developing the draft of the code. The standards quantify building principles we would like to see implemented. Skip said to send the draft code via e-mail.

Walter asked if Skip could assist Johnson with reviving the idea of placing a crosswalk across RT 15. VTrans has not been willing to approve the crosswalk because the amount of foot traffic does not meet VTrans' warrants. Walter said that pedestrians do cross in that area and the crosswalk is very much needed.

David Butler said that the Planning Commission would like to encourage public transit and asked if Skip would be willing to see a part of his lot used as a bus stop. Skip said yes, provided it is only a bus stop. He would not want the bus takers park on the lot.

Skip Vallee and most members of the public left at 8PM.

Following the meeting with Skip, **David Bergh moved and Phil Wilson seconded the motion to send Skip a thank you letter with the summary of key points and attach a draft of form based code. All voted in favor.**

The key points to be included in the letter are:

- Move the building forward toward the sidewalk;
- Replicate, albeit perhaps on a simpler scale, the two-story building built in Newport. A multistory building would be a great fit with the neighboring multi-story buildings used by the Vermont Studio Center and Johnson Historical Society;
- Accommodate a potential public transit bus stop; and
- Communicate with VTrans about the need for a crosswalk on Route 15.

#### *Municipal planning grant suggestions*

Lea said that each year, the State offers municipal planning grants of up to \$20,000 for various planning activities. This year's priorities include updates to municipal plans and bylaws as well as special planning projects for designated village centers or downtowns. Lea asked whether the Planning Commission had ideas for potential grant applications. She suggested that writing a sign ordinance for the Village could be one theme. David Butler asked whether public outreach related to form based code would qualify. Lea thought it would but was not sure that the timeline of the grant fits our needs. Kim asked whether a planning theme related to the Jewett property would be a possibility. David Bergh said that a continued work on the unified plan could perhaps be considered. David Grozinsky asked about planning for public transportation. Lea suggested teaming up with the regional planning commission for that project. Brian Boyden suggested planning for pharmacy.

### *Form Based Code*

Lea said that the Committee and Paul Dreher completed a final draft of the code. Lea will email the code to the Planning Commission for a review. The Planning Commission will hold a meeting later in July to discuss and get educated about the proposed code. David Grozinsky suggested inviting a few members of the Form Based Code Committee to answer questions. The proposed dates for a work-session to review the code are July 27, 29 or July 30. Lea will follow up via email to specify.

### *Unified plan: next chapter to review*

Lea suggested that the next chapter to review is Energy. This can be done in August. She also proposed to form subcommittees for a review of the Education and Recreation chapters. She will follow up via email regarding the composition of the subcommittees. The Planning Commission discussed potential meeting dates in August. Two options are Aug 3rd or 24th. Lea will follow up via email to specify.

----- Notes taken by: Lea Kilvadyova