

**Johnson Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, May 12, 2015**

Present JPC members: David Butler, David Bergh, David Grozinsky, Kim Dunkley, Cynthia Hennard, Ben Waterman, Phil Wilson. Guests: Melinda Scott and Rob Moore (Lamoille County Planning Commission), Duncan Hastings (Municipal Manager and Road Commissioner) Lea Kilvadyova (Community and Economic Development Coordinator).

Note: All votes are unanimous unless otherwise noted

David Butler called the meeting to order at 7:12.

David said during Johnson Planning Commission's meetings another group has been utilizing the upstairs meeting space which has left the Planning Commission with having to use the back room. David told the group that in the future, the Planning Commission may need to use the larger front room for public meetings. Lea will find out who the contact person is for the other group to coordinate the use of the meeting space.

Review of April 14, 2015 minutes

David Grozinsky moved and Kim Dunkley seconded the motion to approve the April 12th minutes as presented. Ben Waterman abstained. All others voted in favor. The motion passed.

Correspondence review

Lea said that there were two letters related to applications for wastewater system and potable water supply permits.

Unified Town and Village Plan: Transportation Discussion

Lea introduced the draft of the Transportation chapter of the unified plan. She said that Rob Moore, Melinda Scott, Duncan and herself worked on this draft.

The review began with Duncan's comments. He said that he would like to add to the Transportation chapter information about the cost of maintaining paved vs. gravel roads. This cost will be increased as a consequence of soon to be enacted legislative requirements pertaining to Total Maximum Daily Loading (TMDL) of sediment, phosphorus and stormwater runoffs. He said that the LCPC conducted a road erosion hazard assessment study for Johnson and this study will be useful in projecting the increases in road maintenance costs.

Duncan said that among the things we should be planning for are training opportunities for highway maintenance crew and a potential increase of the cost of gravel. Currently, the Town uses its own gravel to repair roads. However, since the Town's gravel is not of the highest quality, we may need to start purchasing a more expensive dense graded short pack material that is less susceptible to erosion. Cindy asked when it is expected that the proposed legislation will become law. Duncan said he expected the law to pass by the end of this legislative session.

Kim asked Duncan a question about making roads more bicycle friendly. She mentioned a spray painting technique that would place “share the road” signs on paved roads. In our town, these signs would be particularly helpful on Clay Hill and Railroad Street between the Rail Trail and Main Street. Rob Moore said that Morristown recently purchased a so called “sharrow” template that they would be willing to loan to other towns. The template is a large stencil with an image of a bicyclist.

Lea said there is a paragraph in the Transportation chapter that describes the “Complete Streets” legislation enacted in 2011. This legislation mandates that Towns include pedestrian and bicyclist minded solutions when they build or repave paved roads. Sharrows are viewed as the least costly way of complying with the legislation.

Duncan talked a little bit about the complexity of maintaining Johnson’s transportation infrastructure which currently is a shared effort between the Town and the Village. Duncan said that in order to simplify the complexity, he suggested to the Selectboard and the Village Trustees to explore the hiring of a public works superintendent that would be shared by the Town and the Village. Duncan said that the Boards are not ready to go that route but he feels they should consider it. Now would be a particularly opportune time since the Village’s Public Works Superintendent recently retired from the job, and the Town Road Foreman as well as Duncan will be retiring soon. Lea said that while reviewing the Transportation chapter, Rob Moore also asked whether a merger of the superintendent/foreman position has been considered.

Ben asked whether we should write something into the report regarding culvert replacement. Can we do anything with the culverts so we do not have to incur an annual culvert replacement cost? Duncan responded that unless we find a pipe that is more durable than corrugated metal pipes we have been using so far, we will have to budget annually for culvert replacement cost.

David Butler suggested that we write up language that will ask that the Selectboard and the Trustees jointly budget resources for culvert and storm drain systems replacement. Duncan said that the Town already has the line item for culvert replacement. The problem is that the line item hasn’t been adjusting to reflect the amount actually needed. The Village has not been budgeting for storm drain system replacements and it needs to because the storm drain system is totally antiquated. One problem with the Town and Village’s separated responsibilities is that the Village cannot access VTrans’ grant program that funds replacement of structures such as storm drains, only Town can. Yet, it is the Village that is responsible for storm drains.

David Grozinsky asked whether it would be appropriate to have something in the plan about the redundancy of maintenance cost resulting from separation of work between two local governments. Lea suggested that one way to approach it would be to ask for a study that would evaluate financial impacts of dealing with two local governments as opposed to one.

Further discussion about the Transportation chapter included the following thoughts:

- Kim would like to clarify the paragraph describing pedestrian improvement plans to make it clear which activities are planning activities and which are implementation activities.
- Kim suggested that we add the description of access points to the Long Trail.

- David Butler asked to clarify that the Town is not responsible for maintaining regional trail networks (Long Trail, LVRT and VAST trails).
- David Bergh asked to beef up the public transit paragraph and highlight the demand for the extension of public transit to Johnson. Now that we have CCTA coming from Burlington to Jeffersonville and GMTA serving Morrisville and Hyde Park, Johnson is the only community on RT 15 not connected to public transit. Rob Moore said that the regional plan contains several references about the need for public transit in Johnson.
- David Butler said that while the Town does not operate the public transit service, it is the Town's responsibility to provide infrastructure that will support public transit and ride sharing. This includes park and ride lots, bus stops, etc. A policy to this effect should be added to the plan. Rob Moore pointed out parts of the regional plan that have references to multi-modal transportation.
- David Butler pointed out that there is no snowmobile access to the Village. The plan should mention identify this as an economic development issue for the Village.
- David Butler said that as Town roads get wider through the process of repair and grading, property owners are seeing the shifting of town road right-of-ways onto private lands. The current practice is that when the road is widened land owners are not involved in that process and they should be. David would like to see a mention of this in the plan.

Approval of Dreher report

David Butler said that the Form Based Code Committee has been making lots of progress. One specific example they talked about was a structure's first story height. David made a comment that the first story height be specified as wall height rather than interior height. Another example was a discussion about a part of the code that says that changes to the square footage of a structure greater than 35% need to follow the code. David said that Walter was under the impression that this applied to interior changes. It was clarified that the 35% threshold applies to exterior changes to the footprint of the structure.

David said that the group is very close to finishing their draft. Lea added that the group intends to be done by the end of May. **David Bergh moved and David Grozinsky seconded the motion to approve the Dreher report and recommend to the Selectboard the payment of Paul Dreher's invoice. The motion passed.**

Review of floodplain/river corridor map

Melinda made a map with floodplain and statewide river corridor layers. She said that while the floodplain layer shows inundation, the river corridors are meant to show areas where erosion hazards exist. It is misinterpreting to see the layers as the same thing because they are not. The layers depict different types of flood hazard area. The river corridors are a very coarse picture of what the erosion hazard is. At the request of towns, the State Rivers Program staff will meet with towns to the River Corridor layer.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Minutes taken by Lea Kilvadyova