

Johnson Planning Commission Meeting Draft Minutes

Johnson Municipal Building

Tuesday July 19th, 2017

Board Members Present: Charles Gallanter, Kim Dunkley, Phillip Wilson and Paul Warden, David Butler, Rob Rodriguez, Ben Waterman, Brian Story

Other Attendees: Meghan Rodier – LCPC, Staci Pomeroy VTDEC, Ryan Murphy LCPC

1. David called the meeting to order at 7:04 P.M.
2. Minutes from June 28th were reviewed. Paul moves to accept the meeting as written. Charles moved to add to the June 28th minutes that it is our understanding that there will be no changes to the form based code as a result of the public hearing on August 2nd. Charles's motion passed unanimously. Paul moved to accept the minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously. Brian explained that if we choose not to accept the code as written for the public meeting we could then choose to amend the code, host another public meeting, and then approve and pass the code to select board. David discussed why the public hearing was moved from July 26th to August 2nd. He said that they missed the public announcement date for the News and Citizen by 1 day and therefore had to reschedule it one week. Ben Waterman arrived at 7:14. It was clarified that a quorum would be necessary for that meeting.
3. Meghan, Ryan and Staci introduced and gave an overview of the river corridors and what their purpose is. Staci explained the difference between FEMA flood maps and river corridors. River corridors are designed to map potential flood hazard areas and prevent future development due to lateral migration of the channel. They also encompass smaller stream sizes than FEMA projects. Adopting river corridors is voluntary, up to the select board to adopt. David asked what the benefits would be to adopting river corridors. Staci explained the insensitivity of additional Emergency Relief Assistance Fund (ERAF) dollars would be guaranteed for the town if the community chose to adopt river corridors and regulate development within the corridors. Staci explained how the river corridors were created and how they are being refined with ground truthing. Staci discussed the possibility of going out and further refining the corridors on the ground if we had specific areas of concern. Ben asked whether we should feel out the potential of adoption by the select board before we do further work to refine the corridors. Charles asked about the FEMA community rating system which is another option to get additional ERAF funds. If the town chooses to pursue and complete the community rating system flood insurance premiums have the potential to decrease, however additional work would need to be done by the town and that would take at least a year. The two programs are not mutually exclusive and Johnson could choose to pursue both. Further discussion of river corridors was had including discussion of small streams. Under the river corridors streams between 0.5 and 2 sq mi watersheds get a minimum of 50ft setback under the river corridors. The corridors would grandfather existing development however they would prevent it from moving closer to the

streams. Kim D. asked if storm runoff were addressed in river corridors. Staci said no that would not be addressed in this process. David asked how this corridor regulation would be enforced, assuming we passed something. Staci said the enforcement really falls on the town unless it trigger act 248 or 250. Just like with the National Flood Insurance Program, NFIP, our floodplain manager would enforce the corridor. David asked how adopting these corridors would protect the village. Staci answered that by preserving the floodplain those floodwaters will not be coming down towards the village. Kim D. asked what the process would be to move river corridors forward, theoretically. First the planning commission would vote to move it to the select board. The select board would need to approve it but it would most likely head to a public vote. David asked Brian what the select board's appetite for corridors would be. Brian said that would be depended on the public response to the meetings. David asked about enforcement and how that would be done. There is the potential, just like with the FEMA NFIP program, to be ignored or skirted. The state has no teeth or penalty to enforce river corridors, it is up to the towns to enforce and regulate. Discussion was had on the timeline and moving forward. It was generally thought that any potential discussion of river corridors would need to be separated from the form based code discussion since that is going to be moved on this fall. The current river corridors as drawn by the town are available through the ANR Natural Resources Atlas online for everyone to view. The commission is going to suggest dates to do future field work the Staci and Meghan to further educate the commission.

4. Brian and David discussed the upcoming public hearing on form based code. According the Brian at that meeting the commission will vote at that point to send it to the select board. The version at that meeting must be passed on or voted down. If voted down another public hearing must be had before we can vote to pass it to the select board. The select board cannot make any changes to the code. The public hearing is merely informational.
5. There was no correspondence in the mail this month.
6. Ben and Charles discussed pursuing the FEMA community rating system since that has the potential to decrease flood insurance premiums. We will discuss that at a future meeting.
7. Other business. Kim brought up the Green Mountain Scenic Byway which was discussed at the select board meeting. There is the potential to increase this program to include Johnson but there will be some cost. This byway program would be beneficial to the town but it will most likely be a select board action. Phillip will work with LCPC to get materials printed for the public hearing. The committee will try to outreach for the public hearing.
8. Ben motioned to adjourned the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:10 P.M.

The next scheduled meeting is August 16 at 7:00P.M. at the town office. A special meeting is planned for August 2nd at 7:00P.M..