

JOHNSON PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

Regular Meeting: THURS, 14 DEC 2023, 7PM EDT

In person at Butternut Mountain Farm Store, 31 Main St., Johnson

Members (P=Present; A=Absent)

Adrienne Stevson	P	Kim Cotnoir	A	Paul Warden	P
Charles Gallanter	P	Kyley Hill	P	<i>Vacant Seat</i>	
David Butler	A	Rob Rodriguez	P	<i>Vacant Seat</i>	

Other Attendees:

- Meghan Rodier and Alberto Della Torre, LCPC

Call to Order 7:00 pm

Changes & Public Comment – Added discussion of the Town/Village Plan Schedule per Maghan Rodier

Roll call – See above.

Housekeeping

- Approval of Minutes from 12 OCT 2023 meeting: Rob moved; Kylie seconded, no discussion. Passed unanimously.
- Mail: None.

Chair / Member Updates: Chair – Update of Lamoille FiberNet: Very close to finalizing contract with CCI. Still on track to build vast majority of the un/underserved addresses in the 10 Lamoille County towns in 2024 – which would be amazing. Adrienne reported that the Rail Trail Committee was regrouping; had some meeting for which no minutes were posted, so the Committee must revisit some discussions. Looking for a grant for minutes.

Municipal Plan Schedule:

January 2024: Land Use / Review of Plan

Feb 2024: Send draft plan to Selectboard and Trustees

March 2024: Address SB initial comments

Apr 2024: Warn Public Hearing (JPC)

May 2024: JPC Public Hearing / Address Comments

June 2024: Warn Trustees Public Hearing

July 2024: Trustees Public Hearing / Warn Selectboard Public Hearing #1

Aug 2024: Selectboard Public Hearing #1. Warn Public SB Hearing #2

Sept 2024: Selectboard Public Hearing #2. Address comments and adopt plan.

NOTE: Current plan expires Sept. 19th – public hearing #2 and adoption should be prior to 9/19. Selectboard may want to adjust the schedule to hold Public Hearing #1 in June or July rather than August.

Brief review of previously edited Town Plan Chapters

- Education – Generally accepted as edited, clarifications made to emphasize the JPC’s view of the importance of the Johnson Public Library to all citizens, not just youth. The importance of a strong and successful Johnson Elementary School in attracting families to Johnson was discussed, but beyond Town/Village control.
- Recreation – Generally accepted as edited. Emphasized importance of outdoor recreational opportunities to attracting students to VSU-Johnson. Some discussion regarding citizen use of the JES gymnasium and whether demand exceeds capacity; if so, efforts should be made to engage VSU-Johnson and their facilities to enhance recreational opportunities. Under “Rivers and Trails” there was discussion to identify the parcel of property in Coddington Hollow purchased by the State; LCPC revealed it was previously one of the last privately owned sections of the Long Trail.

Flood Resiliency Chapter Review and Discussion re Flood Resiliency Planning

General discussion regarding the conundrum of the current Town center being in the flood plain and the State’s development goal of increased density of development downtown areas with less development in more rural areas. Under “Existing Settlements,” the Chair questioned the statement “Infill should be allowed...” given Johnson’s flood history – consensus was that new development in the flood plain (infill) should be discouraged, if not outright prohibited. Any development allowed should require compensatory flood water storage offsets to prevent worsening of flood impacts. The group decided the Municipal Plan should set general preferences and Flood Hazard Bylaws – which the JPC will revisit and submit to the Selectboard and Trustees – should be the venue for setting strict policy.

The group discussed River Corridors as defined by the State (previously, JPC had recommended against adopting the state river corridor plan as it did not adequately match some of Johnson steep topography and bedrock streams). Some discussion about whether that should be revisited – if adequate site visits and ground truthing can be arranged to adjust river corridors appropriately – and that river corridors may be legislated anyway. The list of declared disasters revised to include flood related disasters only and to add July 2023.

Next Meeting 11 JAN 2024. Homework: (1) Land Use chapter and (2) Flood Hazard Bylaws. Chair to invite Tom Galinat (Town Administrator) and Scott Meyer (Floodplain Ordinance Administrative Officer).

Adjourned 8:40pm: Adrienne moved, Rob seconded, unanimous.