

JOHNSON PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

Regular Meeting: THURS, 11 JAN 2024, 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 7:01PM

Agenda Changes & Public Comment

- Moved Johnson Village Center Designation discussion before Flood Resiliency
- No Public Comment

Housekeeping

- Approval of Minutes from 14 DEC 2023 meeting. Kyley moved, Charles seconded, no discussion. Passed unanimously.
- Mail – Charles reported there was no new mail.

Chair / Member Updates

- Lamoille FiberNet – Chair reported that the contract with Fidium Fiber/Consolidate Communications Inc has been finalized by attorneys, will be signed very shortly – be watching for press release. High speed internet to the un/underserved in Lamoille County is coming! Project 85% complete in 2024.
- Rail Trail Committee – Adrienne reported the RTC has been given money for a recording secretary so they can move forward with meetings.

Johnson’s Village Center Designation - Renewal Application.

- Meghan explained the VCD application must be renewed every 8 years and Johnson’s is due July 1, 2024. 4 basic tenets include Cover Letter, Selectboard Resolution, Evidence of a Confirmed Planning Process, and Municipal Plan and VCD Integration.
- Amendments to Designated Village Center Boundary – Can propose, needs review by Richard Amore. Discussed extensively (need commercial/social anchor to justify extensions) and decided to extend as follows:
 1. Full Railroad Street, across river to Food Shelf building and Town Garage. Includes old Parker & Stearns and Manchester Lumber buildings.
 2. Out Rt 15W to include Jolley’s, Electric Coop and Jewett Property.

3. Up Clay Hill to include VSU-Johnson campus

4. Out School Street to include Beard's Beach, Covered Bridge and adjacent Power House property

- LCPC to lead VCD renewal application effort and coordinate for site visit.

Brief review Flood Resiliency chapter edits

- Minor edits made to revised chapter. Corrected edits re Johnson Village and goals for redevelopment and infill, and added discussion of need to consider reimagining the "heart of the village." Discussed flood damage from fluvial erosion (historically greatest) vs. inundation damage (greater damage in Johnson recently). Decided to reformat flood event summary with column headings, footnote for jargon ("DR") and improved spacing. Discussed need to add "After Action Report" section under "Preparing for the Next Flood" (the Selectboard spent time assessing what went right and wrong before, during and after the flood – important work that should not be lost and should be standard practice).
- Discussed "Implementation Recommendations" – Chair proposed that Recommendation be organized into categories to facilitate action. Some Towns use "Responsible Party" (Selectboard, Planning Commission, Task Force, Commercial) – great idea but perhaps difficult. Proposed "Immediate, Short Term, Long Term" (perhaps "1 Year, 3 Year, 10 Year"?). Adrienne suggested "Investigate, Structural, Recovery" – which led to discussion of whether the categories should be standardized throughout the Plan. Uniform categories for all chapters seemed to be the consensus but no vote taken, discuss further at next meeting.

Land Use chapter review

- This Chapter contains a description of Form Based Code (which does not regulate use) and the designated area (Main Street Storefront District, Main Street General etc.) and then discusses land use districts within the Village and within the Town (outside the Village). These "districts" are descriptive only, in that Johnson does not have zoning so they carry no legal authority.
- The Village Industrial District should be expanded to include the electric coop and Jewett Property. Rename "College District" and other clarifying edits were made.
- The Town Districts were reviewed and edited to streamline.
- Highway District was edited for clarity and simplicity. Discussed the existing sentence to protect "prime agricultural land..." vs. property owners rights. Suggestion: "Ideally, development would not impact prime agricultural land, however, Planning Commission recognizes that the rights of property owners to develop their property should be protected."
- Agricultural District - minor edits
- Forest District – Edited for clarity and remove redundancy.

Draft new Flood Hazard Bylaw for Johnson – TABLED FOR LACK OF TIME

- Review NFIP Checklist of Requirements for Flood Hazard Area Bylaws re current bylaw
- Review and edit templates from LCPC

Next Meeting 08 FEB 2024. Tasks: Review Land Use edits and review all Recommendations (categorize?). Goal: Release Draft Plan to Selectboard and Trustees in Feb 2024.

9:20 Adjourn. Kylie moved, Adrienne seconded. Unanimous.