

JOHNSON PLANNING COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES  
ELLSWORTH ROOM, WILLEY LIBRARY, VSU - JOHNSON  
TUESDAY, JUNE 18, 2024

Planning Commission members present: Charlie Gallanter, Kyley Hill, Adrienne Stevson, Paul Warden  
Planning Commission members absent: David Butler, Kim Cotnoir, Rob Rodriguez  
Others present: Meghan Rodier (Lamoille County Planning Commission), Alberto Della Torre (LCPC), Alec Jones (LCPC), Mark Woodward

Paul Warden opened the public hearing at 6:35 p.m. He said this is a hearing to solicit input with regard to the draft Town and Village of Johnson Municipal Development Plan which had been posted.

Paul said he wants to make sure everyone is aware of the Reimagine Johnson effort. This is an effort to bring a townwide group together to think about what we might do differently in Johnson to economically restart it. This is a separate track from the municipal plan but hopefully there will be some commonalities and it will be a spur to get some of the plan recommendations done. The first planning meeting was a couple of weeks ago. The first public meeting will be in July. There was good turnout at the planning meeting. There were probably 30 people there.

Paul mentioned that Fidium trucks have been in town stringing fiber.

Adrienne noted inconsistent typefaces and sizes in the implementation recommendations document accompanying the plan.

Mark Woodward said there are a lot of properties going through buyouts in the village, including one of his. One of the implementation recommendations is to work with landowners interested in the FEMA buyout program to restore riparian and forested habitat and increase public greenspace in Johnson. His understanding is that once the property goes through a buyout it is town land so perhaps this should refer to working with the town. After some discussion some edits were made to this recommendation.

Charlie Gallanter asked if the selectboard has looked at the impact on the tax base of the buyouts. Mark said the town is already feeling it. Most of the people interested in buyouts have come in for tax abatements. There will be impact on the tax base.

Charlie asked what the selectboard decided about housing at the industrial park. Mark said there is not going to be any. The conditions of the Northern Border grant call for it to be non-residential. Charlie said his concern is that there will be no place in Johnson for people to move who are in the buyout program.

Mark said he appreciates the work the Planning Commission is doing. They are the eyes and ears of the future.

Paul said as of July 1 meetings will have to be both remote and in-person. Charlie asked if the town offices will be available by July 1. Mark said he doesn't know. Paul said the selectboard has been meeting at the municipal building. The Planning Commission can meet there even if the offices are not finished.

Meghan Rodier said selectboard and village trustee hearings on the municipal plan will have to take place in August. Then there has to be a second selectboard hearing in September. The current plan expires September 19.

Charlie said after tonight the plan cannot change. Meghan said LCPC will double check what statute says about that. Usually there can be no changes after 30 days from the final selectboard hearing. She thinks changes might be possible right after the first selectboard hearing, depending on the timing. There can be amendments to the plan in the future.

Mark said his personal goal as a selectboard member is to empower committees like this and respect their work, not shoot it down.

Paul closed the hearing at 7:03 p.m.

*Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths*

UNAPPROVED