

Poultney Planning Commission
Public Hearing Minutes
Wednesday, January 12, 2022 – 6:00 pm
Fire House
55 Firehouse Lane, Poultney, Vermont

Hearing Minutes

Purpose: To consider for approval and submission to the Selectboard an updated Town Plan. The geographic area affected by the Town Plan is the entire Town of Poultney. A physical copy of the Town Plan and accompanying maps have been made available for public review at the Poultney Town Clerk's office. An electronic copy of the Town Plan may also be obtained via the website PoultneyPlanning.com, or via email, by submitting a request to: poultneymanager@comcast.net.

Section headings in the Town Plan are as follows:

- The Town of Poultney: Vision, Goals
- The Land: Current Land Use, Natural Resources, Future Land Use, Compatibility
- The Resources: Historic & Cultural Resources, Recreation, Economy
- The Community: Demographic Profile, Town Governance, Facilities & Utilities, Housing, Transportation, Energy, Flood Resilience
- The Plan: Authority to Plan, Planning Process, Implementation

The hearing was called to order at 6:00 PM, January 12, 2022. Commission members in attendance included Doug Langdon, Mark Teetor, Mary-Sue Reed, Neal Vreeland, and Jaime Lee. Others in attendance included Paul Donaldson, Zoning Administrator. Public in attendance included Valerie Broughton, Carol Stierle, Andrew Ohl, Nicolas Stark, Aaron Kerber, Betsy Sinnott, Kimberly Carter, MJ Teetor, Wilda White, Jennifer Lagor, Leo Gibson, Marita Piccolo, Rick Piccolo, and Judy Leech.

Chairperson Jaime Lee discussed the purpose of the hearing, the town plan update process, and the major differences between the 2015 Town Plan and the town plan being proposed for submission to the Selectboard. Commission members discussed various updates to the Plan based on previous discussions, as well as minor grammatical fixes. The floor was opened to the public for comment.

Wilda White, a resident of the Village, pointed out that "Redevelopment Area" has a legal definition in some jurisdictions, and renaming the College Campus land use designation as the Green Mountain College Redevelopment Area might create confusion. The Commission discussed and opted to retain the phrasing.

Leo Gibson of Regenerative Land Holdings inquired about the change of designation for the parcels owned by RLH—situated across College Street from the main college parcel—from College Campus to Village Commercial. Commission members discussed the various uses commonly permitted in the Village Commercial area, and how this designation was more appropriate to these parcels than the Green Mountain College Redevelopment Area would be, based on the purpose of these land use areas.

Nicolas Stark raised several points:

- Available figures from the 2020 Census have the population at 3,020 (the draft Plan listed the 2018 Community Survey estimate of 3,333)
 - The draft plan will be updated to include this latest estimate prior to submission to the Selectboard
- REDC Goals listed in the Economy subsection of the draft plan do not match the goals produced during the REDC workshops
 - It was determined that the goals in question were, in fact, the overarching goals of the Economy subsection, rather than the goals prescribed by the final REDC plan (though the Planning Commission did utilize many of the REDC goals in authoring this subsection). Confusion was likely created by the *style* of the document, which appeared to tether these goals to the REDC narrative. When a municipally approved plan goes to print, a designer will be engaged to beautify the document and clear up such confusions in styling/layout.
- Community branding language, which was discussed in August 2021, did not make it into the draft plan
 - This was an error; the language in question will be re-added to the draft for submission to the Selectboard

Henry Piccolo asked for clarification on the premise of the meeting, and spoke passionately about the need for a strategic plan. The Commission discussed the purpose of the municipal plan, and how this differs from strategic planning initiatives and feasibility studies. It is the hope of the Planning Commission that the proposed Town Plan can be used to support grant applications to fund more pointed initiatives in the future.

Mary Jo (MJ) Teetor asked for clarification on the land use changes. Five parcels, previously located in the College Campus land use area, would be redesignated as Village Commercial, which the Commission determined most appropriately reflects historic use of these parcels (a mix of lodging, residences, college facilities and office space). Four of these parcels neighbor the Village Residential land use area.

Doug Langdon made a motion to approve the draft plan, as amended, for submission to the Poultney Selectboard. Neal Vreeland seconded. No further discussion. Oral vote unanimous, motion carried.

Before the meeting adjourned, Leo Gibson asked to address the Planning Commission and public in attendance regarding a petition to put an item on the agenda for Town Meeting Day.

Neal Vreeland made a motion to adjourn the hearing. Mark teetor seconded. No further discussion. Oral vote unanimous, motion carried.

s/ Jaime Lee, Chair