



TOWN OF STOWE
PLANNING COMMISSION – SPECIAL MEETING
Meeting Minutes
March 21, 2022

The Town of Stowe Planning Commission held a meeting on **Monday March 21, 2022**, starting at 5:30 p.m. with remote participation available via Zoom. There was no public meeting space.

Members present included Mila Lonetto- Chair, Neil Percy, Robert Davison, and Brian Hamor. Chuck Baraw, Chuck Ebel, and Arnold Ziegel were absent. Staff Sarah McShane was present. Others present included Harry Shepard, Bobby Murphy, Catherine Crawley, Donna Adams, Marina Meerberg, Scott Weathers, Elizabeth Sopher, Rick Weinstein, Michael Lazorack, Will Havemeyer, Cap Chenowith.

The meeting began at 5:30 pm.

On a motion by B.Davison, seconded by B.Hamor, the minutes of the prior meeting were unanimously approved as submitted.

No updates or public comments were provided.

The Commission welcomed the Energy Committee for a joint discussion on recommended updates to the Stowe Town Plan. Energy Chair Catherine Crawley began by reading an opening statement. She reported time is of the essence to address climate change. C.Crawley reviewed the recommended changes to the policy statements related to Energy in the Stowe Town Plan. General discussion points and questions included:

- B.Davison inquired about #22C and whether the recommended distance is far enough.
- B.Hamor had a question regarding geothermal technologies. C.Chenowith answered the recommended edits are not intended to limit geothermal energy sources.
- N.Percy inquired about #12 and the mandate to go all electric. He wondered whether it would increase costs. C.Crawley answered that the direction of future development should strive not to rely on fossil fuels, and it is important to prioritize electric. C.Chenowith suggested that the town should ween from using fossil fuels which will benefit all.
- M.Meerberg noted that heat pumps have become more affordable and electric heat is the way technology is headed. It will become more affordable and a reasonable alternative to fossil fuels.
- Chair Lonetto reported that she had recently visited the affordable housing project currently being constructed in Morrisville which is entirely electric.
- L.Soper added that the costs of improvements always is brought up in discussion however the cost of climate change is also expensive and will only increase with time. The upfront costs will result in less costs down the road.
- N.Percy felt the proposed language goes too far and questioned whether the town should be requiring or encouraging. He suggested rewording the use of the term 'electric' to 'renewable sources of energy' - and evaluate wording of #12.

- C.Chenowith added that we should not limit new technology and should leave room for new technologies to be developed.
- S.Evans suggested that the town does not have a lot of time and Stowe should be setting an example.
- B.Hamor added that the State of Vermont has high energy efficiency standards. He suggested that interested persons attend the Better Building Workshop from Efficiency Vermont. He noted that construction techniques play a large role in energy conservation.
- C.Crawley noted that the town will be receiving ARPA funds that could be used for qualifying energy projects.

Members thanked the Energy Committee for their work and attendance. The Planning Commission does not currently have an immediate schedule to update the Stowe Town Plan but recommended the Energy Committee continue to review the existing tasks. Staff McShane noted that Lamoille County Regional Planning Commission recently indicated that they will be receiving updated LEAP data and could assist in preparing graphics for inclusion in the Stowe Town Plan.

The Planning Commission then switched to discussion of Cannabis Establishments. Staff McShane shared her draft proposal. B.Davison urged the Commission to act quickly. He asked if the town had a public nuisance ordinance. Staff McShane responded that the Town Manager had recently shared the town's Public Indecency Ordinance. N.Percy and others felt the regulations should be drafted to be conservative. Members agreed MRV would be an appropriate zoning district for retail cannabis should the town opt in. At the next meeting the Commission will review the draft and a zoning map and discuss possible locations for cannabis establishments.

Members had a brief follow-up discussion regarding the prior joint meeting with the Selectboard. Staff and Chair Lonetto will prepare additional materials for next PC meeting.

The meeting adjourned shortly after 7:00 pm.

The next regularly scheduled meeting is April 4th.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah McShane, Planning & Zoning Director