

**Town of Vershire Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 11, 2023 at 7:00pm at Vershire Town Center building.
There will be a remote option for this meeting via Zoom or by phone.**

Attendance: Gregory Wilson-chair, Eleanor Zue-vice chair, Nate Thames, Justin Will, Bob Perkins, Gretchen Harvey-secretary, and Reva Seybolt.

Call to Order: G. Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:03pm

Agenda Review & Modifications:J. Will requested adding a report of his meeting with S. Atwood-Health Officer under old business. G. Harvey wants to add a couple of announcements at the end of the meeting.

Public & Staff Comments: R. Seybolt, chair of the TCB committee and leader of the fundraising effort for a TC pavilion, wants to provide the PC with an update on the effort to date. She summarized the fundraising schedule and wants everyone to attend the kickoff-event scheduled for Saturday 21st at the TCB. It will begin with an afternoon of skating with a bond fire and hot chocolate and will be followed by a spaghetti dinner. The fundraising campaign will have 60 days to complete its work in order to receive a 2 to 1 match from Better Places Program-VT. The committee hopes to raise \$20,000 in order to receive \$40,000 from Better Places. If all goes as planned, the hope is that the pavilion will be ready for Vershire day and the summer camp.

Approval of Minutes: G. Wilson moved to approve the minutes of 12/14/22. J. Will seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

- **Town of Vershire's Conflict of Interest Policy**

Action: N. Thames moved to recognize that the Planning Commissioners have read the *Town of Vershire's Conflict of Interest Policy* and that under its *Article 3* they understand that their work is governed by this policy. J. Will seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Preparation for 1/25/23 topic meeting on Housing**

N. Thames has looked at town plans from area towns and in particular at their housing sections. He pointed out the most relevant aspects of these plans are their goals, policy suggestions, and implementation plans. Given this data and feedback from a "Housing" meeting on 1/25/23, the PC will need to decide what important updates are needed to the existing Town Plan. He has reaches out to some developers to invite them to attend and share their perspectives on the types of regulations they face when building new construction. He also recommended PCs look at <https://www.keystothevalley.com/> which is a study of housing in the Upper Valley of VT/NH. In particular, what are ways that Vershire might be able to encourage the building of affordable housing. When Act 250 comes into play, it becomes important for the Town to be on record (Town Plan) about its housing goals. One concern many towns have are the costs associated with new construction. Inviting D. Kingsbury-Lister to the meeting could be very helpful to gain her perspective on this issue. The following discussion veered to general comments about lot sizes, conservation lands, and denser development options along VT113 vs. in more rural locations. It is important to start brainstorming about what kinds of housing Vershire needs and wants: senior housing, intentional housing that shares infrastructure, duplexes on single lots, Habitat for Humanity projects, tiny/eco homes, etc. Another topic that is bound to arise will have

to do with short-term rentals and their impact. Current litigation about short-term rentals in Burlington will be something to watch. It also will be helpful to find out how much land in Vershire is in conservation protection, as well as how the current rules on 2/10 acres lot sizes, could limit how many houses overall “could” theoretically be built in Vershire. Ways to promote and invitations to the meeting on the 25th concluded this discussion.

Old Business: J. Will followed up on his task to consult with Steve Atwood, Town Health Officer about the research needed to write a new Health section in the Town Plan. S. Atwood explained that a health committee: ‘Board of Health’ already exists in Vershire and is made up of the selectboard and the town health officer. S. Atwood will ask the town to repurpose the existing charge of the committee to include working on developing goals/suggestions for the Town Plan. S. Atwood will put some thoughts down and share them with the PC. It would be great if he was willing to facilitate the topic meeting on Health tentatively scheduled for October.

Misc. : E. Zue noted the proposed bill to ban military-style training camps in Vermont. Guns that are not for hunting are a concern. Another comment noted mental health needs in the community vs. calling in law enforcement when there is a problem. G. Wilson reported that the TRORC intern will not be free to help with this TP revision work until April. N. Thames suggested that it might be best to wait until later in the process when the writing/revision of the TP has begun in earnest and after all the information is gathered.

Tentative Working List for Topic Discussions/Facilitators

- 1 Housing (January-N. Thames)
2. Economic Development (February- J. Will)
3. Town Facilities and Services
4. Emergency Services
5. Education
6. Transportation
7. Current and Future Land Use
8. Natural Resources
9. Resilience and Sustainability
10. Community Health (October-

Other: G. Harvey noted that 2 PC openings are on the horizon. PCs serve 4-year terms:
Justin Will 2023 Robert Perkins 2023
Gregory Wilson 2025
Eleanor Zue 2026 Nate Thames 2026

G. Harvey also reminded the Commission that an annual report summary and budgeting requests of the PC (including secretarial for meeting 2X/month in 2023) need to be submitted to Gene Craft by the end of the month.

Adjourn: N. Thames moved to adjourn at 8:13 pm. J. Will seconded. The motion passed unanimously.