

**Rutland City Planning Commission  
Minutes  
March 11, 2020**

**Present:** Susan Schreibman (SS), Patrick Griffin (PG), Alvin Figiel (AF) and Dave Coppock (DC).

**Absent:** Larry Walter (LW).

**Also Present:** Tara Kelly, Planning Director and Zoning Administrator and Barbara Spaulding, recording secretary; Aldermen Etori, Talbott and Mattis; RRA Executive Director Brennan Duffy, Steve Steigerwald, Marlene and Philip Allen of Same Sun.

SS, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

- I. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS** – SS suggested moving the Same Sun request after the minutes.
- II. PUBLIC COMMENT** – None.
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 12, 2020.**

PG moved to approve the minutes of February 12, 2020. DC seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**IV. OLD BUSINESS – Coughlin 360 West Street, Preferred Site status.**

Marlene and Philip Allen from Same Sun of Vermont were present to discuss the status of the Preferred Site Designation for 360 West Street. The request was originally brought before the City Planning Commission in April of 2019 at which time the Commission signed off on the designation. The Board of Aldermen did not agree to the designation at that time. The property owner, Coughlin, pursued development of smaller array of which 50% powers Central Vermont Motorcycle and 50% powers the McDonalds.

Recently, the Board of Aldermen granted the preferred site designation to another solar project and decided to revisit Coughlin's request. The Aldermen have since granted the designation at 360 West Street. Despite the project already built the designation will allow for expansion. The developer requests the Planning Commission once again sign off on the preferred site designation. PG asked if a fence was planned for the north gateway and whether landscaping was considered on West Street. Ms. Allen distributed a copy of the site plan that showed the proposed landscaping per the solar siting guidelines.

DC moved to approve the Preferred Site designation for 360 West Street and the Chair signing the form provided. AF seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**V. NEW BUSINESS – Planning Commission Report for Municipal Plan Adoption.**

The draft report was submitted to the Commission prior to the meeting for their review. There was discussion regarding a sentence about the timing of the DPW and Building & Zoning updates. PG moved to approve the report. DC seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**VI. OLD BUSINESS – Draft City Master Plan – Review comments.**

SS said that the comments and changes regarding the Education Park District have been reflected in the draft plan, as well as, the Zoning 4.9-4.12 and Housing 8.7-8.10 as provided by Building & Zoning. She also added changes to Section 2.8 Energy Plan and Section 9 Natural Gas written by Commissioner Coppock. This new document will be the draft provided to the Board of Aldermen and starting point for additional comments and changes tonight. The draft master plan was then projected on the wall and the Commission proceeded to go through the proposed changes.

Discussion started with DC's changes regarding natural gas in the Executive Summary. He would like the master plan to reflect the Planning Commission's opinion that a gas pipeline be discouraged for Rutland City. The Commission agreed to save the changes to Section 2.8 Energy Plan.

The Commission agreed to the RRA's suggestion to remove "garish" from 4.8i in the Land Use Plan. The RRA also questioned why the Commissioners removed language in 4.2a recognizing commercial development of approximately 250 acres of agricultural land along Otter Creek. AF did not want to see the agricultural land used commercially. PG suggested that there could be a commercial use that complemented the land. The consensus was not to include commercial use.

The Commission did not agree with the RRA's suggestion to change the language with regard to Road Diets in 5.1a of the Transportation Plan. In addition, the Commission did not agree with the RRA's suggestion to omit the creation of a bypass in 5.8(h). Brennan reiterated the RRA's concern that a bypass would have detrimental economic impacts on the City. Planning Commissioners described their desire for a more walkable community.

Alderman Etori suggested an update to Section 8.3g Subsidized Rental Housing Providers stating that the HTRC conversion of a former school into 15 units of senior housing because it has since been built. However HTRC is currently working on 19 units of housing for the homeless at Lincoln School. The sentence was stricken with no update.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding proposed changes to Section 9, Energy Plan natural gas pipeline. The language included specifics regarding the developer VGS to which AF suggested putting that language into a separate handout for the Board of Aldermen and RRA. PG suggested using bullet points for potential pipeline issues. AF suggested substituting three paragraphs that he wrote, into the section. The Planning Commission added those changes to the draft.

Brennan Duffy asked the Commission if it is their shared opinion not to support a natural gas pipeline in Rutland City under any circumstances. The Commissioners responded that is was.

SS discussed the changes to Map 6 and Map 7. The Railyard Relocation was removed from Map 6 and the CSJ property was removed as a school on Map 7.

AF moved to forward the Master Plan draft with changes dated 3/11/2020 to the Board of Aldermen. PG seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Sign Ordinance Update.**

Alderman Mattis reported that if she is reassigned to Chair of the Charter & Ordinance Committee she will proceed with creating a lighting section in the proposed sign ordinance. The new section will regulate lighting instead of disallowing it altogether. She believes the proposed sign ordinance could pass by the end of summer 2020.

## **VII. CORRESPONDENCE.**

SS received a response from the VT Public Utility Commission regarding Granger Enterprises Solar project at 171 River Street to the Planning Commission's letter date 1/30/2020. The Planning Commission, at that time, approved the Preferred Site designation for the project provided runoff from the site was contained and did not negatively affect the Rutland Creek Path. SS met with Joe Giancola regarding the solar array project at 171 River Street and is confident that he will make the necessary topography changes at the site to protect the Path. SS would entertain a motion to sign the Preferred Site Designation form (dated 3/9/20) provided by Judith Whitney, VT Public Utility Commission. PG so moved and DC seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

## **VIII. ADJOURN.**

PG moved to adjourn. AF seconded. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting ended at 8:22 pm. The next meeting will be held March 25, 2020.

For the Commission:

Barbara Spaulding, Recording Secretary