

**Town of Warren
Planning Commission
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, August 28, 2023**

Members Present: Camilla Behn (Vice Chair), Macon Phillips, Dan Raddock (Chair), Jim Sanford, Adam Zawistowski.
Members Absent: Jenny Faillace
Staff Present: Ruth Robbins, Zoning Administrator, Carol Chamberlin (Recording Secretary)
Others Present: Alice Cheney, Lisa Miserendino

Agenda:

1. Public Comment
2. Continued PC discussion on priorities:
 - a. STRs
 - b. Housing
 - c. Mapping
 - d. LUDRs
 - e. Town garage
 - f. Meet with Selectboard
3. New and Other Business

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm.

Public Comment

Lisa Miserendino (Lisa M) asked about opportunities for public input during the meeting, and it was explained to her that the Public Comment portion of a meeting is for addressing topics which are not on the agenda.

Alice Cheney (Alice C) requested that last names be included when a person is mentioned in the agenda/minutes.

Continued Discussion on Priorities

Process – Dan began a discussion of which priorities should be discussed with the Selectboard and what the timing of that conversation might be. Camilla explained that the Board is still working on hiring a Town Administrator, but that she will try to get a Selectboard/Planning Commission discussion on the agenda for their last meeting in September. The following was discussed related to that upcoming conversation:

- Should any of the subcommittees feel there is a budget need related to continued work on their topic, that information should be available for presentation to the Selectboard
- The PC approaches outlined should be Warren-specific, and any crossover with MRVPD work should be acknowledged
- The PC is seeking confirmation for the topics discussed to be placed on a priority list for the PC to work on going forward
- Any of these topic areas to be pursued following discussion with the Selectboard will have plenty of opportunity for public input
- What is presented to the Selectboard should be agreed upon by the PC as a whole
- It was agreed that quarterly presentations to the Selectboard would be beneficial going forward

Town Garage – Camilla had no update other than reporting that what was a potential property for siting the garage on Route 100 is no longer available for purchase. She also reiterated that a public safety assessment resulted in an uncomfortable report regarding the conditions for those working in the building and at the site.

Jim noted that the new owner of the property mentioned may be interested in creating housing, and he wants to make sure that there has been a related discussion with the owner regarding all potential permutations regarding this property.

Camilla explains that if money and energy is put into rebuilding the town garage in its current location, it would likely be more prudent to look at other options for housing rather than continuing to pursue Town Garage relocation and subsequent housing development.

Macon reiterated his previous comments regarding the garage, expressing his concern that all potential avenues have not been explored. He asked for clarification of the Selectboard process followed when a potential property is available. Camilla explained the importance of privacy for landowners in Town discussions regarding properties.

Jim explained that almost every Route 100 property from Granville north to the Waitsfield town line were looked at when the process of searching for a new garage site first began.

LUDRs – Camilla explained that the Selectboard has already met once with Margo Wade regarding sections of the LUDRs for which Sugarbush expressed concerns, and that they will be meeting with her again this week to continue the conversation.

Housing – Macon explained that he and Jenny are pursuing the establishment of workforce housing, rather than attempting to solve the general housing problem. He noted that their next step is anticipated to be surveying what other groups or municipalities have done to create housing; there was some discussion regarding whether a broader group would be suitable for addressing some of the work involved, and it was decided that Macon and Jenny might complete some information gathering before open things up to a housing commission or other group. Lisa M suggested reaching out to Downstreet and mentioned that Montpelier has a local tax to raise housing money. She also indicated that Morrisville had done community outreach before pursuing their recent development of housing. Dan suggested that reaching out to former PD staff members who have worked on housing matters would be helpful.

STRs – Dan reported that he had looked into the measures taken by Chester, Morristown, Killington, and Woodstock. He noted that Chester and Woodstock had addressed the issues through a town ordinance and that Killington's current related bylaws are a temporary measure in place until a town ordinance is established. Morristown has actually adopted bylaw language that does not allow STRs in their Residential zoning districts.

Dan indicated that he felt the most useful was Woodstock's ordinance, which is centered on requirements to have STR hosts include the space they rent in a registry. This allows for ensuring that necessary safety inspections and tax registrations have been addressed. He explained that the information provided through a registry will help to inform further discussion to help evaluate the general assumptions made regarding the positive and negative aspects of STRs.

Alice C asked that the information gathering process included speaking to residents and learning what impacts STRs have had on the character of the Town. She also asked that the PC consider a definition of STR that includes up to 3-month stays.

Mapping – Adam explained that he and Jim intend to put together a visual presentation covering some of the recent history of planning in Warren, including charettes and visioning work that have helped define what the town is imagined to be going forward. He noted that even if it is agreed that things should generally remain the same, particularly with how the Village looks and feels, planning is required in order to make sure structures are in place to maintain things as status quo. A master plan will help guide decisions made towards either static or dynamic goals.

Adam also pointed out that the visual presentation planned will help inform a future charette, it was agreed that another charette would be beneficial. It was also determined that Jim and Adam would hold a discussion with the PC at an upcoming meeting before moving ahead with creating this visual presentation.

Communication – Camilla explained that she and Macon had discussed that a narrow scope would be best for beginning any work related to communications. She and Macon also indicated that the possibility of creating a newsletter had been discussed, and they had agreed it would require a too involved and time-consuming process to have an effective newsletter compiled and distributed. Camilla outlined that the intended communication goals are to expand the audience for PC work, making sure those who are interested are able to stay informed and engage more easily. Providing the community with a way to learn the highlights of meetings and request information might also help determine how much interest there is in what the PC takes on. It was agreed that Camilla and Macon will provide a sample of a brief communication based upon this meeting, for review at the next PC meeting.

New and Other Business

MRVPD Update – Dan outlined some problems that the Waitsfield WW project has run into related to grant awards that had been anticipated but are no longer expected to be awarded, indicating that the project will take longer to complete; the PD will be discussing for how long Joshua Schwartz will be able to dedicate a portion of his time to the project.

Dan also noted that the draft Data Report is available from the PD, and reminded the group to review this and let Sam Robinson know if anything seems amiss or any data prompts an interest in further information. It was agreed that the data included in the report might initiate discussions regarding what trends might be seen moving forward, although Adam pointed out that the past few years may be more of an anomaly than the beginning of new trends. Macon asked if any data specific to Warren might be available from the PD’s work.

Minutes were signed.

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary

Planning Commission

Jim Sanford date

Camilla Behn date

Jenny Faillace date

Dan Raddock date

Michael Bridgewater date

Macon Phillips date

Adam Zawistowski date