

**Town of Warren
Planning Commission
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, November 13, 2023**

Members Present: Camilla Behn, Jenny Faillace, Macon Phillips, Dan Raddock, Jim Sanford, Adam Zawistowski.
Staff Present: Ruth Robbins, Zoning Administrator, Carol Chamberlin (Recording Secretary)
Others Present: None

Agenda:

1. Public Comment
2. PC Priorities discussion
3. SB Updates – LUDRs, Open Seat, Budget
4. New and Other Business

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

Public Comment

Nobody offered comments at this time.

Agenda Changes

No changes were made to the agenda.

PC Priorities discussion

LUDRs - Camilla explained that the Selectboard will be finishing up their review of the draft LUDRs this week, and that the Board had intended to next meet with Brandy of PlaceSense to receive her answers to questions which had been raised and other input regarding the edits they had discussed during their review. It was discussed that a response received from Brandy indicated that she was leaving the country for an unspecified time and that she was no longer planning to work with Warren on the LUDRs.

Some suggestions were made for seeking another consultant to engage with to finish the LUDR work, and Camilla cautioned that it should not be anticipated that a new consultant would provide a complete overhaul, but rather help to assist in addressing the specific issues that have arisen, particularly areas where there appears to be contradictory language in different sections of the draft document. She explained that there are also sections of the LUDRs for which the Selectboard has outlined their intentions, but need a consultant's expertise in drafting appropriate regulatory language.

There was some discussion regarding the logistics of further review with a new consultant; it was pointed out that the Selectboard will need to have the initial conversations, as it is their feedback that is currently requiring the expertise of a consultant, although it was agreed that the Board and the PC will be working together to get the draft LUDRs to the finish line.

Visioning – Adam indicated that a charette is being planned for an April/May timeframe, and that the group is envisioning a workshop to be held every five years. These five-year workshops would be structured to look at past, present, and future initiatives; evaluate current states; and plan for the upcoming years. He reviewed some of the range of needs that the group has identified, including affordable housing, the lack of a local pharmacy, and connectivity between the MRV towns, noting that the group would like to focus on how the Town can help in moving new and existing initiatives forward. Adam spoke of the visuals being planned for presentation to the Selectboard in January as well as information being gathered for inclusion in the charette materials, including town amenities, statistics, natural features/wildlife, the history of Warren interconnectivity, and so forth. Jenny pointed out the usefulness of the Town Plan as a resource.

Adam spoke of the potential for initiating a weekly summer gathering similar to the Round-Up held in Waitsfield. Camilla noted that this is organized and sponsored by a business; Ruth suggested the East Warren Community Market as a potential location for this type of event.

Affordable housing – Macon and Jenny reported that they have met with Michelle Lebovitz and that the conversation had provided a lot of background information, including some different perspectives regarding the needs of business owners. They explained that they will be meeting with Joshua Schwartz as well, after which they will provide the group with a more substantive report of their findings.

Jim reminded the members of the scale and somewhat lower level of construction quality necessary in building affordable housing.

Communications – Macon presented some ideas for posting/emailing PC meeting updates, demonstrating some automated creation of transcripts and synopses, and asking about the logistics of PC member review and posting of the information created. Dan offered to check with VLCT regarding what level of approval by the PC is required before posting. Several aspects of improving communications were discussed, including the timing of notifications, the depth of information to be provided, and the logistics necessary. It was agreed that Macon and Camilla, with input from Adam and Jenny if they are interested, will bring together a more specific proposal at an upcoming meeting.

STRs – Dan provided some further information regarding the two software applications being looked at by the PD, it was agreed that a demo of the software to both the PC and Selectboard would be useful.

Ruth spoke of the many facets of information to be gathered and studied before it can be determined if an approach is needed, and what that approach might be. Dan noted that an ordinance can be designed to address any of the aspects of STRs determined to be needing attention: health and safety, nuisance and character of the neighborhood, impact of STRs on local housing availability. The software being considered would help provide the data needed to determine the nature of the impacts. Camilla pointed out that the proposed LUDR language requires registration, which would also help provide data. Dan indicated that the software being evaluated would not lead to much of an administrative burden.

SB Updates

Camilla noted that Bob Ackland will not be running for re-election to the Selectboard, and explained some of the logistics involved in running for the position as well as background on what it takes to be an effective Board member.

New and Other Business

State/Local priorities – Dan reported that he had met with Kari Dolan, and discussed potential strategies for connecting town and state priorities, as there is focus at both levels on many of the same issues. He noted that the focus in the Legislature appears to be more on urban needs, for example looking at homeless emergency shelters rather than affordable housing.

Town garage – The possibility of sharing a location with Waitsfield, which is also needing to improve their garage, was raised. Jim noted that it would take a person/group with the energy to champion such an initiative in order to have it gain any momentum.

MRPD Update – Dan reported that the MRVPD continues to work on outlining their priorities.

Minutes were approved and signed.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 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