

Montgomery Planning Commission Minutes
Special Meeting (Regular meeting cancelled due to weather)
Public Safety Building / Library
July 13th, 2023, 4PM

Present: Peter Locher, Alissa Hardy, Barry Kade, Kenny Miller

Guest(s): Emily Kloffft (Regional Planning)

Meeting called to order at 4PM

1. Additions/Deletions to Agenda: none
2. Approval of June 13th meeting minutes: Peter motioned to approve, Kenny seconded motion, final minutes approved 4-0
3. Town Plan Update
 - a. Community Outreach event: discussion and review the Community Vision Workshop held on June 20th 5-7PM at the Rec Center
 - I. About 25 residents in attended this workshop and voiced constructive suggestion as to what issues should be considered and/or addressed in the Town Plan update.
 - II. The common themes of focus were:
 - Land use
 - Transportation
 - Municipal/Community Facilities & Services
 - Natural & Historic Resources
 - Economic Development
 - Energy & Climate ResilienceSpecific themes and comments are summarized on Attachment A
 - III. Extend outreach by contacting those that commented for further detail of what they envision. Encourage broader participation/comment through town website or forum.
 - b. Discussed meeting twice monthly (once with just the commission and once w commission and Regional Planning) beginning September 5th (and 22nd?) .
 - c. Targets:
 - Create and approve skeleton/outline of complete plan by end September
 - Final draft of Town Plan updated by end November or December latest for Selectboard review.
 - d. Format: Narrative vs outline format. Vision Statement should be in narrative Shorten the content (not scope) of the plan by consolidating and/or restructuring elements. Introduce graphics as supporting information. Consider some limited use of photography

e. Discussed including an enhanced Energy Plan

4. Regional Planning Update: Tabled until August
5. Fema Mapping and Updates: not yet available for review, tabled until available.
6. Public Comment: none
7. Other Business:
 - a. Emily (Regional Planning) will research/report on the issue of grandfathering as it applies to Short Term Rentals (STR) in Zoning by-law
 - b. Kenny postponed his pending resignation through at least the completion of the Town Plan
8. Items for next meeting: focus on Town Plan Update Chapters 3-7. Emily will prepare a packet of Draft Chapters for our review by July 25th. To be discussed at our regular meeting on August 8th.

Peter motioned to adjourn, Alissa seconded. All in favor 4-0. Meeting adjourned 5:38PM

Attachment A: Community Vision Workshop summary

Attachment B: Current Plan Format

Attachment C: Possible Re-structuring of Plan format

Current format

1. CHAPTER 1. Introduction
 - a) Purpose & Authority
 - b) Planning Process
 - c) Role of Planning Commission
2. CHAPTER 2. Visions for the Future of Montgomery
 - a) Vision
3. CHAPTER 3. Summary of Goals and Policies
 - a) Goals & Policies of Each Chapter
4. CHAPTER 4. Community Profile
 - a) Past, Present and Future Population Data
 - Population & Households
 - Economic Data
 - Grand List Data
5. CHAPTER 5. Archaeological, Historic, and Scenic Resources
 - a) Town History
 - b) Cultural and Historic Resources
 - c) Scenic Resources
6. CHAPTER 6. Community Facilities
 - a) Public Buildings
 - b) Recreation
7. CHAPTER 7. Community Services
 - a) Police, Fire and Rescue
 - b) Library
 - c) Municipal Website
 - d) Solid Waste Disposal
 - e) Childcare & Teen
8. CHAPTER 8. Community Utilities
 - a) Water Supply/Systems
 - b) Wastewater Disposal/Sewage Systems
 - c) Telecommunications
9. CHAPTER 9. Economy
 - a) Data on commutes
 - b) Agriculture
 - c) Business & Industry
 - d) Village Designation
 - e) Tourism
 - f) Home Businesses
 - g) Challenges to Economic Development (Streetscape, sewer, telecommunications)
10. CHAPTER 10. Energy

- a) Local Energy Consumption
 - b) Energy Conservation
 - c) Renewable Energy
- 11. CHAPTER 11. Transportation
 - a) Transportation Planning
 - b) Highway System
 - c) State and Town Bridges
 - d) Maintenance of Local Transportation Network
 - e) Transit, Air Travel and Rail
 - f) Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities
- 12. CHAPTER 12. Education
 - a) Montgomery Elementary School
 - b) Other Educational Facilities
- 13. CHAPTER 13. Housing
 - a) Change in Population, Households, and Housing Units
 - b) Affordable Housing Needs
 - c) Specialized Housing Options
 - d) Options to Increase Housing Variety and Affordability
- 14. CHAPTER 14. Natural Resources
 - a) Biophysical Region
 - b) Topography
 - c) Soils
 - d) Earth Resources
 - e) Surface Waters
 - f) Ground Waters
 - g) Wetlands
 - h) Floodplains
 - i) Significant Wildlife Habitat
 - j) Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species
 - k) Forest Fragmentation
 - l) Wildlife Travel Corridors
 - m) Water resources
- 15. CHAPTER 15. Flood Resiliency
 - a) Flood risks
 - b) Floodplains
 - c) River corridors
 - d) Promoting Hazard resilient measures
- 16. CHAPTER 16. Land Use
 - a) Current land use
 - b) Constraints to Development
 - c) Proposed Land use districts

17. CHAPTER 17. Volunteer Community Groups

- a) List of community groups in Montgomery

18. CHAPTER 18. Compatibility with Neighboring Towns

- a) Compatibility with each neighboring town and regional plan

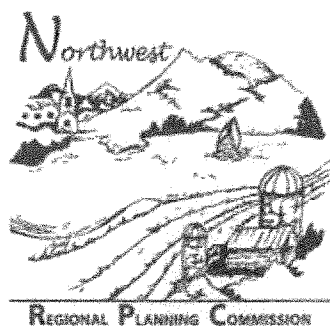
19. CHAPTER 19. Implementing the Plan

- a) Implementation Steps

Possible Restructuring

- ✓ 1) Introduction
 - a. Vision for the future of Montgomery
 - b. Purpose & Authority
 - c. Planning Process & Role of Planning Commission
 - d. Community Profile
- ✓ 2) Goals, Policies and Implementation
 - a. Full list of goals policies and implementation actions in the plan
- ✓ 3) Archeological, Historic and Scenic Resources
 - a. Town History
 - b. Cultural & Historic Resources
 - c. Scenic Resources
- ✓ 4) Natural Resources
 - a. Environment of Montgomery
 - i. Biosphere
 - ii. Topography
 - iii. Soils
 - iv. Air Quality
 - b. Water Resources
 - i. Surface Waters
 - ii. Ground Waters
 - iii. Natural Springs
 - iv. Wetlands
 - ✓ v. Flood Resiliency
 - 1. Floodplain
 - 2. River Corridors
 - c. Forest Resources & Animal Species
 - i. Significant Wildlife habitat & Rare Species
 - ii. Habitat Blocks & Corridors (Cold Hollow to Canada)
 - iii. Forest Fragmentation
 - d. Outdoor Recreation
- ✓ 5) Housing
 - a. Change in Population, Households, and Housing Units
 - b. Housing Options & Affordability
 - c. Options to Increase Housing Variety and Affordability
- ✓ 6) Economy
 - a. Data on Commute, Income, Employment, Businesses and Poverty
 - b. Agriculture & Forestry
 - c. Local Businesses (including home businesses)
 - i. Role of tourism

- ii. Types of local businesses
 - d. Challenges to Economic Development
 - i. Workforce Development
 - ii. Sewer
 - iii. Telecommunications
- ✓ 7) Land use
 - a. Current Land Use
 - b. Constraints to Development
 - c. Village Center Designations
 - d. Proposed Land Use Districts
- ✓ 8) Transportation
 - a. Public roads & bridges
 - i. Town Highway System
 - ii. State and Town Bridges
 - iii. Maintenance
 - b. Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities
 - i. Existing facilities
 - ii. Connectivity between Villages
 - iii. Village Streetscape
 - c. Transit, Air and Rail Facilities
- ✓ 9) Community Facilities and Services
 - a. Community Facilities
 - i. Public Buildings
 - ii. Recreation Facilities
 - iii. Water & Wastewater
 - iv. Telecommunications
 - b. Community Services
 - i. Police, Fire and Rescue
 - ii. Library
 - iii. Municipal Website
 - iv. Solid Waste Disposal
 - c. Education & Childcare
 - i. Elementary School
 - ii. Other Educational Opportunities
 - iii. Youth activities
- ✓ 10) Energy
 - a. (Option to adopt enhanced energy plan)
- ✓ 11) Compatibility with neighboring municipalities
- ✓ 12) Appendix
 - a. Volunteer Community Groups
 - b. Summary of Public Outreach



75 Fairfield Street • St. Albans, VT 05478 • (802) 524-5958 • Fax (802) 527-2948

Date: July 13, 2023

To: Montgomery Planning Commission

From: Emily Kloffft, Regional Planner

Re: Summary of June 20th Community Outreach Event

The Town Planning Commission held a public outreach event on the Town Plan on June 20 at the Montgomery Recreation Center Pavilion. The outreach event was advertised online at the Town website & on Front Porch Forum. Flyers were distributed through the Elementary School, at a senior lunch, and posted at locations across town. Roughly 25 residents attended the outreach event. A full list of resident comments is included as an attachment. Common themes are summarized below.

Land Use

Some residents identified the village areas as areas to increase density of affordable housing, although others noted that commercial building height should be capped at 2-3 stories. Zoning enforcement & limitations on short-term rentals were discussed.

Transportation

The Montgomery Center intersection of VT 118 and VT 242 was identified as a major safety concern. The current streetscape project was not able to fully address the needs of this intersection because any change would have impacts on parking for local businesses. Many residents pointed to the need for a bicycle and walking path or lane from Montgomery Center & Montgomery Village. Other areas identified were the need to protect and define the existing bike path by the recreation center and adding a bike path from the library to the riverwalk. Transit from Montgomery to Jay Peak was also mentioned.

Municipal & Community Facilities & Services

Many residents noted that there was a need for more community & youth spaces, such as a theater camp, skate park, outdoor recreation equipment, and a community orchard. Several residents mentioned using the opportunity of streetscape improvements to bury utilities in the villages. Other resources that were needed or discussed were a food shelf, mental health & healthcare providers. There were several comments about adding to town staff capacity, particularly someone who could apply for grants.

Natural & Historic Resources

There were several comments about access to natural resources for recreation, including preserving or formalizing hiking access & access to swimming holes and brooks. Protecting the Trout River & Missisquoi River and associated watershed were a key priority for many residents, including ensuring flood resiliency. Protecting forest areas as part of the “Cold Hollow to Canada” wildlife corridor was also an important priority. Residents noted that springs on private property used by members of the public should be protected.

Energy & Climate Resilience

There was interest in a municipal solar project. Several comments addressed the vulnerability of Montgomery Village to flooding and the need to preserve floodplain and wetlands.

Housing

Many residents identified the need for senior housing in the villages, particularly Montgomery Center. Affordable housing was also identified as a need in the centers.

Economic Development

There was interest in food co-ops and a professional kitchen space that would allow for microbusinesses.

Land Use

- Cap commercial building height- 2 stories? 3 stories?
- Maintain: Zoning enforcement
- Develop land adjacent to water treatment/pump house in Montgomery Village
- District designation for Montgomery Center
- Montgomery Center: Increasing affordable density of village centers is a great and critical priority given climate change, the preservation of the unique wildlife corridor in our town, and the protection of water + other resources.
- Montgomery Village- Maintain & transform (no clarifying post-it)
- Limitations for STRs
- In Montgomery Center- parking lot in lieu of off-street parking

Transportation

- Existing bike paths by rec center and 242- are on private land and may not exist in future if land is developed/permission to use is revoked
- Transform: Major safety issues with Montgomery Center intersection
- Add transit from Montgomery to Jay Peak
- Between Montgomery Center and Montgomery Village on 118- protected bike lane
- Bike/walking path from village to center
- Bike path appropriate for strollers/kids bikes from the library to the riverwalk
- Emergency services access by Richford border near Black Falls
- Also would like a path between the Center & Village with a stop at the school
- Please fix the corner where the municipal building & 242 meet. You cannot see drivers coming up 242 from the driveway. Someone is going to have a serious accident there.

Municipal & Community Facilities & Services

- Easier swimming hole access
- Walking trails (similar to Jay Rec Center?)
- Bury utilities on Main Street when wastewater & streetscape goes in
- Increased funding for rec center (events, music, kids programming)
- Paid town positions (part or full time) to search for/apply for state & federal grants, coordinate among local non-profits, businesses and schools for funding programming and events
- On town owned land- community orchard, community space to gather undercover to hold workshops & teaching opportunities
- Children's theater camp at the grange
- Rec center playground- replenish sand & add trash can to limit litter
- Outdoor exercise equipment at the rec center
- Municipal solar
- Additional personnel at the town office to support current efforts, including grant writing
- Bury Main Street utilities with wastewater & streetscape
- Skate park at rec center
- Montgomery center- location base for health care advocate/representation, even once-a-week
- Community food shelf/resource center in Montgomery Center

- Access to medical/mental health needs in Montgomery Center
- Continued development of the town land between the water treatment and ball field for physical activities (snowshoe, walking paths, etc)

Education & Childcare

- Daycare center near Montgomery Center

Natural & Historic Resources

- Protect watershed
- Trout River- "heart of area")
- Wild & Scenic designation of Trout River & Upper Missisquoi
- Need to protect springs, not "public" but relied on by many- possible to have source water protection?
- Bike hiking access near Deep Gibou Road
- Evolve- land off Deep Gibou Road
- Evolve- Area near High Ponds Road
- Evolve- Town land near Creager Rd
- Work on increasing & maintaining access to brook and swimming holes
- Recreational access to state land in northeast of Town
- Establish a center or area to look at the positives for Japanese Knotweed
- Maintain spring off Hill West Road
- By Longley Bridge/Montgomery Village- Allowance for flood mitigation, large confluence of area water
- Southeast corner of Montgomery in Con II District- Wildlife corridor, flood mitigation through runoff, maintaining wetlands in headwaters + landscape watershed planning
- West Hill area on Enosburgh border- Swimming hole maintenance + protections (Committee?) (Easements?)
- West Hill area on Enosburgh border- Exploration and work around maintaining access to brook and river swimming holes

Energy

- Municipal solar array

Housing

- Evolve: Add senior housing in Montgomery Center
- Montgomery Center: Senior housing close to services & affordable housing
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Economic Development

- food hub/coop- supporting neighbors & local economy with organic healthy food options for families
- Montgomery Village- An economic center/commercial kitchen for small kitchen businesses to encourage micro-businesses.

Climate & Hazard Resiliency

- Flooding concerns in center