

Worcester Planning Commission
MINUTES
October 22, 5:30 p.m. via ZOOM

Attending: Chani Waterhouse, Will Baker, Bill Arrand, Toni Kaeding

Guests: Rebecca Heintz

Housekeeping

- Chani called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm with a welcome and roundtable sharing of a beautiful moment from the current autumn season
- Minutes of 9.9.24 were duly approved by unanimous vote
- Chani introduced Rebecca Heintz and group welcomed her as possible candidate for seat on Planning Commission.

Updates

CVRPC and Act 250 proposed changes

Bill offered a summary of CVRPC activities, including status of H.687 which proposed broad reforms to Act 250, Vermont's signature development law. The legislature over-rode the Governor's veto of H.687 and in June 2024 made into law reforms which seek a balance between housing growth and environmental conservation.

Energy Task Force

Chani gave a general description of the Task Force work to create an Enhanced Energy Plan, provided an introduction to membership (not present) and outlined 3 targeted areas of energy conservation: thermal (heating), transportation, and electricity. Sam Lash from CVRPC is supporting the work. Current activity has focused on thermal and a proposed open letter to the public addressing challenges of "net metering" (see below). The Task Force has a goal of January 2025 to produce first draft of Worcester Enhanced Energy Plan.

Net Metering Letter

Chani shared a proposed draft of an open letter to public energy officials, Legislature, community and adjoining towns outlining the inequity challenges inherent in the current implementation of net metering. While the letter does not oppose net metering, it does suggest a modification that would benefit the most rural of citizens using net metering (many Worcester residents). Following discussion, group agreed to the distribution of the letter by the Energy Task Force, a committee of the Worcester Planning Commission.

Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

Toni reported that Worcester's updated LHMP had been completed with good assistance from CVRPC staff Lincoln Frasca and Keith Cubbon, approved by the Selectboard, and submitted to Vermont Emergency Management for final approval according to schedule. Caroline Paske from VEM responded with a few questions that are currently being addressed by CVRPC with input from Worcester town officials. Final approval of the LHMP by VEM is critical to Worcester's eligibility for FEMA support for reparations of 2024 flood damage.

Commissioner Terms

Chani noted the pending review of current Planning Commissioner terms, including appointment of CVRPC liaison, by Dec 31. Bill will confirm the process with CVRPC and report at next meeting.

Next meeting: Nov 14, 5:30pm via ZOOM

Toni Kaeding