

**Montpelier Planning Commission**  
**June 9, 2003**  
**City Council Chambers, City Hall**

***Subject to Review and Approval***

**Present:** Chair David Borgendale, Members Anne Campbell, Irene Facciolo, Carolyn Grodinsky, Sara Teachout, Planning Director Valerie Capels, Planner Stephanie Smith.

**Absent:** Curt McCormack, and Bryan Mitofsky.

**Call to Order**

Mr. Borgendale called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

**Comments from the Chair**

There were no comments from the Chair.

**Operating Procedures**

The members received, prior to the meeting, the amended language as discussed at the May 27 PC meeting. Once the revisions are approved by the Commission they will be forwarded to the City Council for ratification.

The Commission decided that Section V Point B should be read "The Chair may appoint a Commissioner to serve as parliamentarian", and that point #3 under C was repetitive of #2, and should be struck. The Chair took a vote with the amendments as discussed. Ms. Campbell motioned, seconded by Ms. Grodinsky, that the Rules of Procedure as revised be adopted. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Capels said she would forward it to City Council for ratification.

**Transportation Plan Update**

Ms. Capels explained that four proposals were received. Buckhurst, Fish and Jacquemart, a firm out of New York, did not make the subcommittee's first cut. The subcommittee's first choices were Smart Mobility and Wilbur Smith with Bannon Engineering as a close third.

Ms. Grodinsky explained why she was impressed with the response from the team made up of Smart Mobility and Robert White, LA. She said they had the most innovative approach, and incorporated a high level of public participation. She thought they had an "*out of the box*" process outlined in the proposal. Ms. Grodinsky called the references supplied and got good responses about Smart Mobility's work. Ms. Grodinsky said that she spoke with Gina Campoli of ANR, she said that she was impressed with the work of Lucy Gibson, the project manager. It was also clear from the proposal that they had strong graphic skills.

Ms. Teachout's first choice was Wilbur Smith. She checked on references and discovered that they consistently produce a good product. They have planners, engineers and landscape architects on staff. Ms. Capels said they have done work for the city in the past and have performed above and beyond what has been stated in the contract.

An example of a previous contract with Wilbur Smith is the East West Bike Path project, and they were recently hired for the Rear Lot Parking Structure feasibility study.

The Commission thought it would be important regardless of the final choice that the contract state a required number of public meetings the consultant will have to attend and/or organize.

Smart Mobility's cost proposal was \$3,000 dollars more than Wilbur Smith's cost proposal. It was noted that the additional cost is for consultant time and an intensive public process.

The City received a planning grant for \$15,000 from the Department of Housing and Community Affairs. Money has also been budgeted in the Capital budget for the Master Plan update. The Commission agreed that the additional dollars would be well spent if it meant a holistic approach with a more public process.

Ms. Grodinsky made the motion to recommend to the City Council, the firm of Smart Mobility, Inc. for the Transportation Update of the Master Plan. Ms. Campbell seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Fix-it List**

In a memo, staff brought to the attention of the Commission a *fix it list* of typos and suggested substantive changes to the zoning regulations. In addition to these items the Development Review Board had discussed some concerns with demolition of buildings and a desire to protect historic resources outside of the DCD. Ms. Campbell added that she thought there was disconnect between the zoning regulations and the goals of the Master Plan, especially with respect to the Planned Development criteria. Ms. Capels also thought that there should be an escape clause in the demolition requirements if a tragedy occurs, so that property owners in a time of crisis could get assistance with exemption from the permitting process. The Commission decided to table further discussion until their first meeting in July.

### **Interim Zoning**

Ms. Capels met with City Attorney Steve Stitzel, City Manager Bill Fraser, and Councilman Chris Smart concerning interim zoning and permanent zoning for Sabin's Pasture. She informed Commissioners that a separate action would have to occur to repeal the interim zoning. She also said that the City Council expects to see draft zoning for Sabin's Pasture in 3-6 months.

Commissioners went over some of the data they would like to review at their next meeting in preparation of the zoning update. Some the items mentioned were:

- Natural resource inventory
- AADT counts of city streets (currently without the construction of the Pioneer St. Bridge)
- Draft Regional Master Plan
- Soils data
- Current Land Use patterns
- Constraints map

Ms. Campbell would like more information on tools for protecting open space. Ms. Capels mentioned that this is in State Statute under §4407 of T24 Ch 117. Ms. Capels also suggested a presentation by someone who is familiar with the tools at a Planning Commission meeting. The Planning Commission agreed this would be helpful.

Ms. Grodinsky would like to have an inventory of vacant parcels in town. This information would help identify potential growth areas in the city. Ms. Capels said that this type of information is not yet available. The tax map update is going on right now and will be complete in September. The maps that the city currently uses are inaccurate and would be only marginally useful. Vacancies are also difficult to ascertain because there is no single source for the information.

A Commissioner asked how much development can the city realistically handle and what types and how much open space is needed for a city Montpelier's size?

Ms. Campbell stated that she thought the small size (population) of Montpelier makes the city beautiful, and at what point will Montpelier start seeing the negative effects of growth? She referenced Concord, MA and how they have managed to preserve open space in the outskirts of city and have managed their population growth.

Ms. Facciolo said that it should be important for any plan for growth to maintain a city of diverse incomes levels and ages within the population, and that all planning activities should encourage walk-ability. The planning commission should be conscious of what they and what the public wants to see for the future of Montpelier.

A Commissioner suggested that new large scale development should be mixed use. Ms. Teachout thought that the planning commission should try and maintain a vibrant downtown. If they create new

smaller commercial centers it might take away from the vibrancy downtown. The Commission agreed that some commercial uses located at the edges of the city (small markets and laundrettes) could minimize the auto traffic into downtown.

Mr. Borganale thought the Commission should discuss at what rate the population of Montpelier should grow. Ms. Capels said there are sustainability measures the Planning Commission can look into to explore that threshold.

Mr. Borgandale would like the Commission to create a sub-committee to assemble a work plan, which outlines the tasks before the Commission with regard to drafting permanent zoning for Sabin's Pasture. Mr. Borgandale would like a work plan hammered out by July 14<sup>th</sup>, he said he is willing to work with staff on this.

#### **Master Plan**

There were no updates for the Transportation Update on June 23<sup>rd</sup>.

#### **Certified Local Government**

The Planning Commission reviewed the Preservation Ordinance as drafted by staff. Ms. Teachout made a motion to recommend that the City Council consider the ordinance as written Ms. Grodinsky seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

Staff will prepare a memo to the City Council laying out the program and its advantages.

#### **Adjournment**

Ms. Teachout moved that the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Ms. Campbell. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Smith, Planner

*These minutes are subject to approval by the Planning Commission. Changes, if any, will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which they were acted upon.*