

Montpelier Planning Commission
August 14, 2006
City Council Chambers, City Hall

Subject to Review and Approval

Present: Ken Jones, Chair; Carolyn Grodinsky, Vice Chair; David Borgendale; Anne Campbell; Craig Graham; Christy Witters; Alan Goldman.

Staff: Joan Clack, City Clerk & Treasurer's Office

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Ken Jones, Chair, at 7:10 p.m. Tonight's meeting is also a public hearing on a proposed zoning amendment.

Minutes

Ken Jones said at a future meeting there would be some minutes of past meetings. We will note for the record there will be notes that have been prepared but not voted on.

Public Appearances

There were no public appearances.

Public Hearing on Riverfront District Zoning

This portion of the meeting is to discuss a zoning amendment to alter the parking restrictions for the riverfront district. There is a proposal which was originally drafted in May to allow for parking in addition to 25 percent lot coverage if that additional 25 percent is shared parking. Ken asked if any Planning Commission members had any points they would like to make at this point.

David Borgendale asked if it was appropriate for him to move that the Planning Commission substitute the language. The current proposal amends item b. in Section 204.B.2.B. to add: **This restriction shall not apply to shared parking areas.** David said he moves they strike the proposed addition and substitute the following sentence:

However, unenclosed parking on an additional fifteen percent (15%) of a lot may be permitted by the Development Review Board if the applicant provides contractual evidence that the use of the additional parking will be shared with another facility or facilities for at least sixteen hours per day.

Ken asked if Planning Commission members had some responses to that. David Borgendale said he moved the substituted language. Carolyn Grodinsky seconded the motion.

Christy Witters asked how he determined 16 hours per day. David said that typically in a shared parking area, an office is open for 8 hours a day, so it would be the rest of the day. If 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. is office, then all the rest of the 24 hours of the day could be available as shared. Ken said you might hold 8 hours of exclusive use, thereby leaving the remaining 16 hours to be used by another facility. David said that was correct. David

said it was his attempt at trying to come up with a definition of “shared parking.” Carolyn Grodinsky said she thought of shared as being used on the weekends. David said there is nothing in the language that wouldn’t allow for 24-hour day sharing.

Anne Campbell said she had a point of clarification on the role of the motion. My preference is to hear from the public before the Commission makes a final determination. Ken said he would discourage having a vote on this before hearing from the public. Fifteen hours a day – 8:00 to 5:00 is often the standard office time.

Fred Connor, representing Allen Lumber Company, said he would respectfully request that the 16 hours a day be 12 hours a day. It is a fairly large concession of a landowner would be making for shared parking with flexible time and folks coming in late and some coming in early. Generally, the business hour is 12 hours from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., or 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Ken said we are here to talk about the general idea and not just this specific language. Initially, the riverfront district had a restriction that any development would only cover 25 percent of the lot with parking at a maximum, and this will allow for a greater extent of parking on some of the lots. In fact, at this point there is only one lot that is subject to this, which is the redevelopment of the Salt Shed. But, in the future, there may be some issues with regards to lots that may already be out of compliance with the 25 percent limit and therefore would be restricted. This is a potential remedy for those lots as well.

Fred Connor said he wanted to add that Allen Lumber presently has grandfathered pavement at about 40 percent. He said he thought it was the right thing to do to make them whole. With Hunger Mt. Coop, when you count the shipping and receiving area, runs between 35 and 40 percent current existing pavement as well. Anne Campbell asked Fred what he meant by his statement to make them whole. Fred replied this would allow them to be in compliance. Presently, they would be non-conforming with any changes in their pavement for redevelopment because they can only have 25 percent. Once the bylaw came into existence in 2002 it made them non-conforming. This made Allen Lumber non-conforming, as it did with the Coop.

Anne Campbell said the last time Fred appeared he was talking about the property on the other side of the Coop. She asked Fred to clarify this. Fred said he was here tonight representing Allen Lumber Company. He was originally here on behalf of 575 Stone Cutters Way, the former Salt Shed. In the course of doing that, he had discussions with Allen Lumber Company and Hunger Mt. Coop. Anne said this would apply across the board. Fred said they were all in the entire riverfront district and it would affect all three property owners.

Ken said since they had heard their public comments they would close the public hearing portion and move on to discuss the motion. Carolyn Grodinsky said in reviewing the zoning ordinance over the weekend that it is interesting to see what the riverfront district is supposed to be about and how the built environment doesn’t reflect that. Carolyn said this is where it gets confusing to her. She thought they were talking about 35 percent,

and now it is 40 percent. Ken said at the last meeting they didn't pick. Now it is 40 percent, which is subject to discussion.

In terms of the motion, there has been some discussion to change the 16 hours to 15 or 12. He would be interested in hearing Commission member's responses to those possibilities.

Anne Campbell said the original intent in changing the zoning which is in place currently in the riverfront district, and the consideration of modifying that at all. Part of her thinking goes to any parking on the riverfront ought to be open to any one at any time. If we are creating a special exception that increases the amount of parking on condition that it is shared, then to say it belongs only to a specific group or business indicates to her that it is not shared. Ken said it is private land. This isn't street parking. Anne said she realized that, but we are talking about the basis for extending the lot size and reverting back to the original zoning on the condition that it is shared. The private land is the 25 percent that is in the current zoning; that's private land. If we extend it beyond that, it is her understanding that it is on the condition that it is shared.

Carolyn Grodinsky said it is the private owner's lot. 25 percent of it can be parking, but if they allow someone else to use it in that number of hours they can extend more of their lot to parking and less into the building. Anne said originally we would extend that on the condition that it be shared parking. Now we are saying it's not shared but only shared when they aren't using it.

Ken said the initial proposal was talking about the Salt Shed property sharing with the Coop. How would we know it was shared, and that's why the contractual language came up. Ken said he was looking for assurance that there was a relationship between 575 Stone Cutters Way and the Coop. The Development Review Board should have something in front of them rather than a vague proposal, so that is what this language addresses. It was facility to facility sharing and not opening it up to the public.

Anne said but the sharing is only when that business has no use for the parking. It's not shared across the board. Ken said this language would not preclude sharing 24 hours a day. Anne asked what are the consequences if somebody parks there other than what the proposal calls for? What are the consequences if somebody parks there on the 17th hour? Ken said he could picture the reserved sign that says parking from 9:00 to 5:00 for ABC, and then maybe a sign at the entrance saying this is reserved for Business ABC and Business EFG. Then, it is up to the landowner to determine if someone is violating those rules, if someone from the public is coming in at any time, or EFG is there during ABC's business hours.

David Borgendale said that's not really the city's business.

Ken said he could also imagine a contractual arrangement between ABC and EFG that this is shared parking. This is saying you don't have to do that. You just need something to let the Development Review Board know that there are two entities that really want

that parking to exist. If 575 Stone Cutters Way gets developed, they are going to have to work with the Coop to get a contract. If they don't have a contract with the Coop, they can't have shared parking. So, if you are the Coop and you want more than 16 hours, you have leverage, because if you don't give 575 a contract for parking they don't have the parking. Anne said then the contract has to be in place before the parking is permitted. David said that was the idea. There has to be a formal agreement.

Ken said the current motion has 16 hours per day. Craig Graham said he would like to see it go down to 12. David said he would have trouble with that. If you allowed 12 hours, and allowed 9:00 to 9:00, you really aren't sharing it. Ken said somebody would have to agree with what the hours are. Anne said the bulk of any business would be transacted between 9:00 to 5:00 or 8:00 to 4:00, and the flexible time for shared parking would be less.

David said the whole idea of sharing makes sense only if you have an ordinary business where people work from 8:00 to 5:00 or 9:00 to 5:00, and the sharing happens with a retail business or an eating facility where there would be a heavy demand in the evening. That is how sharing makes sense. Preferably, it would be shared throughout the day.

Ken inquired if they wanted to go with 16 hours, or are they looking for an amendment. David said he would accept 15 hours as a friendly amendment. Carolyn said she would be fine with 15.

The language with the amendment is amending subsection b. of Section 604.B.2.b to read:

However, unenclosed parking on an additional fifteen percent (15%) of a lot may be permitted by the Development Review Board if the applicant provides contractual evidence that the use of the additional parking will be shared with another facility or facilities for at least 15 hours per day.

Craig said this is amending David's motion. The motion was voted unanimously 7-0. Ken said the Planning Commission now needs to develop a report for City Council. They need to communicate to City Council that there is a zoning amendment for them to consider.

Discussion and Approval Report to City Council on Zoning Amendments related to Sabin's Pasture

Ken said he is using the July 26th document which was the subject of a public hearing in front of City Council. Ken prepared a draft report, dated August 14, 2006, to City Council from the Planning Commission reflecting the changes. They started reviewing the draft report under the goal with regards to controlling future development on ridgelines and hillsides where they changed some of the Planning Commission's work. Anne Campbell said she would add that it is not simply consolidate development, but they also struck any ridgeline protection and views and vistas. Christy Witters said on page 7-41, 715a (10), line 29 is where they deleted ridgelines. Ken said he made a reference to that on 4.2.j., which is the Master Plan goal. The absence of guidelines for

Clearing, Landscaping and View Openings in Section 715E will make meeting this goal difficult. We can include the striking of the ridgelines here. Anne Campbell said the Planning Commission put in a fair amount of work into how one goes about determining visual ridgelines. Ken said they could add a sentence to say: "The lack of identification of prominent hilltops and visual ridgelines, the review of development proposals makes it difficult to include."

David Borgendale said he had a question on page 2 of 9, 3.2.c. of the report. The italicized stuff is from the Master Plan. Anne Campbell said at the time the previous master plan was written the Planning Commission and the Development Review Board were the same. Ken said we could make the change in the next master plan. Carolyn Grodinsky said under the same section we should say that the Planning Commission is not convinced that the use of density bonuses is sufficient to insure the clustering of housing units. It is trying to promote it, but we want stronger language. The Master Plan goes beyond simply promoting the clustering of housing units. It is the protection of natural resources and views and vistas.

The next section is 4.2.j. on page 4. Anne Campbell said for the lack of required clustering the only neighborhood that leaves it compatible with is the Town Hill area. It is not compatible with the whole College Street or Barre Street areas. Ken said the problem he has with that is that this is a report relating to the Master Plan. Perhaps we could say that the lack of a clustering provision allows the construction of a neighborhood that is incompatible with abutting neighborhoods. Ken said they could add an additional sentence under 3.2.c. saying, "In the absence of clustered development, it will be difficult to insure compatibility with densely developed abutting neighborhoods."

Ken said at the end of the discussion about the language he suggests we move the report. There is pressure from the City Council to get them the report, and he wants to get it accomplished. Ken read section 3.2.c.

3.2.c. Revise Montpelier's Subdivision Regulations to include provisions which allow the Planning Commission to consider site conditions, settlement patterns, natural features, the placement of driveways, the location of building sites, and other aspects of a proposed standard subdivision that may impact sensitive natural areas, water quality, and important views and vistas.

The Commission is not convinced that the use of density bonuses is sufficient to insure the clustering of housing units and protect natural areas, water quality, and important views and vistas. In the absence of clustered development, it will be difficult to insure compatibility with densely developed abutting neighborhoods.

Anne Campbell said it seemed that language is more germane to section 4.1. Carolyn Grodinsky said she didn't agree with that because if you think of the large tracts of land they want to see clustered development it is going to be in neighborhoods where there is more land with each house. Ken said we have other problems with low density zoning,

but we are missing the boat with large places like Sabin's pasture that run up against densely developed neighborhoods.

David Borgendale said if you want to place development next to what has already been developed; one of the easiest things to do is say everybody has to be on public water and sewer. Ken said he went to a Central Vermont Housing meeting, and he doesn't think they necessarily agree with this. Barre Town is the current example and they are finding that the extension of water and sewer if you have enough houses isn't that hard. Many people want one-acre housing, and that doesn't seem to be a deterrent. They are extending water and sewer. It increases the cost per lot.

In the absence of clustered development, it will be difficult to insure compatibility with densely developed abutting neighborhoods.

This sentence will be put at the end of section 4.1.

4.2.j. deals specifically with landscaping guidelines.

7.5.a. deals with recreation. The reason this was put there is because of the sledding hill in Sabin's Pasture. They struck recreational sites from 715E.6. This is on page 7-41.

With reference to 5.5.a, Anne Campbell inquired if the bike path was still protected in the zoning map. Ken said it is going to be difficult to develop because it is a public right-of-way. He doesn't think it is a zoning issue.

The very end revisions of the March 16th document talked about the level of service to describe the kinds of changes that wouldn't be allowed if they impacted on transportation. There is no reference to the concept of level of service. He said he was sure there was at VTRANS. Ken said at the July 11th City Council hearing he raised the point where they struck mixed use for minor subdivision review. Craig said in terms of the level of service he wouldn't worry too much because that is probably a reference to something within local transportation documents that Public Works would have. Craig said the only thing he could think of would be ADT (average daily traffic). Craig said he thinks Todd and Tom in Public Works will have that information. Ken said if you were putting in a big development you would have to measure the ADT anyways.

Ken said another interesting thing is they struck conservation commissions as interested persons. Anne Campbell said she thinks the public needs to know the rationale for that.

Christy Winters said Ken forgot to include the goal for section 11.1

Goal. Future land use should preserve the primary qualities which make Montpelier unique, including compact settlement pattern with a mixture of uses and human-scale development.

That should be reinstated.

Craig asked what the time table was for the report to City Council. Ken said we should approve an edited version of this report tonight so it can go to City Council so their next public hearing is legal. Their next public hearing is scheduled for August 30th. It has to be turned in tomorrow.

Anne Campbell said she had a comment on 11.1.a. The removal from 715 A(1), page 7-41, that removal makes policies to protect hillsides and ridgelines. Ken said the Planning Commission's language in the Master Plan never existed in terms of an ordinance but a proposal. That is why he said "in the absence of." We could use the same language under 3.2.

The sentence under 11.1.a. "Article 7 includes a number of proposed provisions that address this objective" should be included under goal 11.1. The new language would read "Article 7 includes a number of proposed provisions that address this goal." We should also keep 11.1.a and say The lack of stated policies in Article 7 to protect hillsides and ridgelines fails to address this objective."

Anne Campbell said she had another question about the goal in 11.1.d, page 6 of 9.
Goal. Promote a land use pattern that expands economic opportunities and sustainable forms of development that will maximize economic benefit but conserve natural resources with minimum environmental impact.

Ken said the change would read as follows:

The proposed amendments focus on compact neighborhood development, provide for mixed uses that enhance the neighborhood and provide economic opportunity. The lack of a clustering provision diminishes natural resources conservation and environmental protection.

The members were in agreement with the change.

Ken said they are going to approve this report as amended by the discussion tonight.

Anne Campbell said on page 7 of 9, the first paragraph should be amended to reading:

The proposed amendments implement some of the land use goals and policies articulated in the Montpelier Municipal Plan by encouraging traditional patterns of neighborhood development, mixed uses, higher densities and affordable housing, and, to some extent, natural and cultural resources protection.

This is more consistent with the rest of what we have said.

Ken reminded members that in this report they can't refer to the Planning Commission's proposal directly. We can only refer to the map changes as changed from the existing ordinance. We can only come up with language that would suggest they could have done

a different job. Anne said she feels this fails to take into consideration the future land use map in terms of the area designated as conservation.

David Borgendale said he would prefer not to discuss this any longer. He is going to vote against this document. He doesn't share the viewpoints about clustering. He said he was glad the City Council took those provisions out, and he certainly is not going to vote in favor of the document. David said what is stated in the Master Plan is a matter of opinion. Anne asked if he was taking exception with the topic of clustering, and David said yes. He said clustering is the wrong tool for the job. For example, under 3.2.c., we have said we are not convinced that sufficient incentives have been provided he might go along with that. He intends to vote no.

Ken told David thanks. He said he could go through and identify the changes in the August 14th draft document, or he could entertain a motion.

Anne Campbell moved the approval of the document dated August 14, 2006, as amended. Carolyn Grodinsky seconded the motion. The motion was 3 in favor and 3 against. Voting yes were Christy Witters, Carolyn Grodinsky and Anne Campbell. Voting no were David Borgendale, Craig Graham and Alan Goldman. Ken said since it was a 3/3 vote, he would vote in favor of the report and sending it along to City Council. A 4 to 3 vote is not the happiest message, and if you would like to discuss this he would be willing.

Anne Campbell inquired of David about the removal of language specific to clustering, that you could approve it without the reference to clustering. David said all of these provisions relating to clustering that the City Council removed improved what we did.

Anne Campbell said that her understanding of the Planning Commission's charge in filing this report is to examine the existing Master Plan and state how the zoning revisions are not consistent with the Master Plan. Ken said they could have written a report that was more supportive by essentially ignoring some of the Master Plan. Let's take clustering as an example. The absence of required clustering is not in violation of the Master Plan. It doesn't support some parts of the Master Plan. There are many parts of these revisions that don't support the Master Plan. They didn't rewrite all zoning ordinances, so they left that part untouched. We could have written a report and not said anything about clustering. My reason for doing this, and the reason I cast that vote, is that he does feel there was a sentiment from the Planning Commission that we took some steps to directly address some pieces of the Master Plan. They got rid of those steps, and he just thinks they need to know that. When he went to the public hearing he asked that they support this and asked them to vote for it. We recognize the Council didn't do all of the things that the Planning Commission tried to do. It's not necessarily a condemnation. He told David that they probably do disagree that a required clustering makes much difference. To him, the major portion of the message is that they didn't do some things that would have supported the Master Plan that we included.

Carolyn Grodinsky said she would like to add to that by them taking out the tool that a majority of the Planning Commission recommended and not including another tool is what she finds fault with. She said she is entirely open to another set of tools.

David Borgendale said he would like to have that discussion, too. One thing that concerns him is the amount of work this body has ended up being for the entire time we have spent on it is that we have been entirely focused on regulation, which is zoning. And if the only way we can promote the goals of the Master Plan is through regulation he doesn't buy. He thinks they spend way too much time talking about regulation and too little time talking about other planning techniques. To say that the zoning regulations have to address every objective in the Master Plan and that's the only tool we have in our tool kit really bothers him.

Anne told David his point was well taken to a certain extent, but what do you do with language in the Master Plan that says specifically "an act through zoning" policies to insure protection of ridgelines, etc. That is a very specific mandate from the Master Plan – an act through zoning.

Ken Jones said he wants to have a little discussion with City Council because a lot of us put real time into thinking through how do we protect natural resources. He said he felt it was safe to say that was not an objective of their zoning. He wants to have that discussion because the Master Plan is clear, and there are a lot of people in Montpelier who are clear that natural resources are important and we have to protect them.

Review Municipal Plan Update – Schedule and Tasks

Ken Jones handed out a paper entitled "Ideas for the Process and Product of a New Montpelier Master Plan" to members of the Planning Commission for discussion purposes.

Ken said he sees as a first step the identification of some of the questions we need answers to and ones the public can weigh in on. We have had a number of forums over the years where we have received a great deal of public input. Carolyn Grodinsky said the forums she sat in on basically involved the stakeholders and didn't involve the public. She doesn't see the forums in which to engage the community. It is a matter of experts coming in and telling us what they think. To her that didn't seem like a public process. It was still very helpful.

Ken said what he would like to start this discussion with is a review of the questions. Are these questions that if we had answers from a broader segment of the Montpelier public that could help us think about some master planning. Carolyn said when they are talking about growth and development they are talking about different models and one of those is clustering. She would like to talk about housing and development versus open space and what are the variety of tools to use.

Ken said he wants a stronger sentiment from the people in Montpelier, even regardless where the housing takes place, or in what form it takes place, or what it looks like,

affordable or not, do we want more housing in Montpelier? Sure, it's easy for people to say they want more housing. We need to know to the extent that more housing starts to raise peoples' concerns. What are those concerns? Are they worried that more housing is going to cause traffic problems? Therefore, certain types of housing will need to address traffic. If they are worried about future development upsetting the character of a neighborhood because of architectural elements or changing density, again we can identify that so when we begin start talking about tools we can hear the concerns people are voicing. Ken said he would love to have some individuals and organizations weigh in on what they think about either too much or too little growth in Montpelier. Then, when we look at chapters in a master plan we can look at transportation, infrastructure, culture and recreational opportunities reflected in those changes in growth. Carolyn said if their concern is transportation, then we should be trying to capture what kinds of housing growth can diminish those concerns.

Ken said his proposal would be to ask folks what are both the positive and negative impacts from increased residential housing in Montpelier. When we get answers to that first question, then we can get a sense of which are more important to what kinds of people because many of these factors are related to other chapters of the master plan? Maybe we can address some of these negative concerns and positive opportunities within the Master Plan and get some discussion going. When do these folks think the positive and negative impacts will occur?

Carolyn said in the first paragraph Ken said he has had to act to proposals without clear guidelines. Ken said he meant guidance and direction.

Anne Campbell said if we look at the question of growth, obviously housing is very integral to that. There is housing, population, infrastructure, roads, water and sewer, transportation. There are the pros and cons of growth. Are there any limits to growth? This is a very germane question, particularly in light of the fact that there is a lot of pressure on us from the regional planning commission members to be the growth center when Montpelier really has not addressed for itself whether or not it has the will to be the growth center, and whether or not there is a desirable limit to that. Ken said that is the sentiment he tried to communicate to the Central Vermont Regional Planning members, that Montpelier is not going to benefit from the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission telling us that we need to grow. We are ripe for that discussion to happen here in Montpelier. How much? What are the limits?

David Borgendale said it always amazes him to know that over the last 50 years there has been no growth in Montpelier. There has been some housing unit growth, but certainly no population growth. That's 50 years of history, and it seems that everyone is terrified by the idea that we are going to be overwhelmed with growth. Ken said he isn't so sure that terror is out there. Ten years ago there was a terror. Now he thinks the school issue really has people thinking. David said in terms of quality of life here we are a regional center, and as a consequence what we have had a great deal of growth with very little population. People come here to work, for business, or to shop. Do people want that growth to continue at the same rate? A lot of problems that are attributable to residential

growth, like traffic, are impacted more by that kind of growth. David said when he first moved here he lived on College Street and was utterly amazed at all of the people coming in from East Montpelier, Plainfield and Cabot, coming down College Street to go to work or to get to the interstate to go to Burlington. It might be that if more of the people who lived here worked here it would alleviate some of these problems. David said he would like to see the Planning Commission direct this discussion.

Alan Goldman said if you are going to talk about growth we should also talk about commercial and job growth. In his mind they are certainly connected to housing growth. The housing growth population hasn't increased in years, but the job population has just about tripled since the 1950's.

Ken said his direction is in housing, but there is a little blurb about jobs and commercial growth. They are linked. If we get some real positive response, what can we do about it? What can we actually do as a Planning Commission? We talk about zoning as a regulatory tool. How do we address jobs?

Alan Goldman said he would also echo that we need to have housing that allows you to walk to work, especially with the price of gasoline. We need to have development that allows mixed use.

Carolyn Goldman said we need housing that allows for diversity with older people, younger people, single people and townhouses. George Seiffert said at one of the housing forums that 39 percent of Montpelier's population lives alone. There is clearly a need to get more families here, but there is also a need for different types of housing for all of the types of people who live here. The One More Home project is an attempt to address that.

Ken Jones says he always stumbles over the issue of diversity and about how to frame it in a way to get responses that are useful. It is his guess that if they sit down one on one with people without microphones and asked if they wanted more low income people to live in Montpelier that a lot would probably say no, not really. If you are in a public forum, no one is going to say that. Where its rears its ugly head is when we talk about the steps necessary to get housing they are not going to be that supportive, even though in public they will say we need more housing. He wonders how we can capture the true sentiment of folks about affordable housing, lower income households. He said some of the business owners, if they need to have workers, it would be great if they could afford to live close to Montpelier. Carolyn said that a member from Washington County Mental Health stated at one of their forums stated that they have 500 employees and they can't afford to live in Montpelier. One way to make it affordable to live here is to make smaller units. By their scale it will be more affordable to live here than somebody trying to buy a house in Montpelier. That's what she means by diversity.

Ken said he agrees with the need, but how do they cultivate the discussion so when they get to that step in the master plan to lay out the steps. Carolyn suggested a small group of the Planning Commission get together and form some questions to present to the

Planning Commission at the next meeting. Ken said that would be good because that is the sequence they actually talked about, using this meeting to prime us for the next meeting. Carolyn Grodinsky and Alan Goldman will lay out the agenda for the next meeting so they can go to City Council. Craig and Ann volunteered to help out on this. Ken said some time in September the Planning Commission will be meeting with City Council, and this could be a very positive and constructive topic to talk with them about. Ken thanked Carolyn for taking the lead on this topic.

Municipal Planning Grant

The deadline for the next municipal planning grant is coming up in middle to late September. Bill Fraser is prepared to help us with doing a grant. Perhaps we can come up with some ideas for a \$15,000 planning grant. Christy Witters asked if there was a possibility to write a grant to get someone to help us with public forums, such as the Charrette Institute. Perhaps we could get someone to help us with bringing in different planning tools and facilitate public forums. Ken said he was sure the answer would be yes. The topic would have to be a little more defined and focused to overall Montpelier growth. The deadline for submittal of the grant is mid to late September and it is awarded mid November to the end of December. The funds would be available in January or February. Carolyn suggested the Planning Commission consult with Valerie to see if there were some ideas she had been working on.

Ken reported there were 13 applicants for the position of Planning Director. Mr. Fraser is going to take 7 or 8 finalists. Interviews start next week, and Ken has been invited to participate in the interviews. What are we looking for? They are looking for someone with specific experience with Vermont land use rules, Act 250, the planning requirements. They think that is very important. Carolyn said we also want someone who is visionary. They should have specific experience in municipal planning. Half of the applicants have worked in planning departments around the country. Specific Vermont regulatory land use planning, actual planning department experience, and someone who can implement programs. Carolyn added they need to be able to educate the Planning Commission about what is out there and what all of the options are. They should possess very good knowledge about smart growth and how to implement mixed development in a master plan.

David Borgendale said one of the specific criteria for a new director is a willingness to draft a master plan. They should have experience with municipal planning in places like Montpelier with a difficult terrain. There should also be a willingness to promote our visions and ideas. Carolyn said the struggle with the master plan and zoning revisions was we were just looking at whatever tools we had. The new director should also have a good sense of humor because humor is really important.

The Planning Commission is going to meet with City Council, and one of the topics is to mend the relationship with regards to the role of the Planning Commission and City Council with regards to planning and the Master Plan. Tonight's discussion raised another example where we should try to work with them to engage the public together.

Another meeting topic should be how we relate to the Development Review Board. Do we discuss this with City Council, or do we schedule another time to meet with the Development Review Board? He posed the possibility of getting a short summary of all of the DRB decisions. When we make revisions to the zoning, when does it come into play? If the DRB is struggling with decisions because of lack of clarity, please let the Planning Commission know. Carolyn said when they are meeting with City Council they should bring up that when they are revising the zoning ordinance that it gives clear guidance to the Development Review Board. Carolyn suggested when they meet with the City Council they should also meet at the same time with the Development Review Board and the zoning administrator. They should also hold a series of public forums. Craig Graham said they are talking about revising the Master Plan. What does City Council want the Planning Commission to include in it? What is their vision?

August 28, 2006 Agenda

The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting is on August 28, 2006. One of the topics is to get a report back from the small committee on engaging the public in the Master Plan. We still need to review natural resources. Ken says he is going to meet with the Conservation Commission so they can plan on talking about natural resources some time in September. Carolyn said there should be an inventory update

Ken said for the August 28th meeting he could provide draft starting point of chapters in the Master Plan. Research for the Master Plan needs updates, and research on ideas for a municipal planning grant.

Adjournment

Carolyn Grodinsky moved adjournment of the meeting, with David Borgendale seconding the motion. The Planning Commission meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Transcribed and prepared by:

Joan Clack, City Clerk & Treasurer's Office

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.