

**Montpelier Planning Commission**  
**January 9, 2012**  
**City Council Chambers, City Hall**

*Subject to Review and Approval*

**Present:** Jesse Moorman, Chair; John Bloch, Jon Anderson, Tina Ruth, Eileen Simpson and Kimberly Cheney.  
Staff: Gwen Hallsmith, Director of Planning and Development  
Clancy DeSmet, Planning & Zoning Administrator

**Call to Order:**

Jesse Moorman, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

**Comments from Chair:**

Mr. Moorman said there are a few people who are interested in discussing the Barriers to Housing Report so they will discuss that at 8:00 P.M.

**Approval of December 12, 2011 Minutes:**

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Anderson and Mr. Bloch the Minutes of December 12, 2011 were approved with a minor change.

**Draft Table of Contents for Revised Zoning Ordinance:**

Gwen Hallsmith reported the city received a \$15,000 municipal planning grant from the State of Vermont to help us continue with the zoning. That is going to be used to engage the Regional Planning Commission with the zoning revisions. That will give additional staff resources to help with the revisions. Her plan was to give the RPC the entire additional ordinance zoning language we have identified to date and have them to do some research and draft some models for us to use. This would be like the housing protection ordinance for the downtown so commercial conversions have some type of reciprocal benefit. All of these types of ordinance language are currently identified in the summary sheets for the different districts. There remains a question about what they want to do with the sign ordinance. That needs fairly substantial revision. We need to know whether we retain the sign ordinance in the zoning or take it out of the zoning and have it as a stand-alone city ordinance. We don't have such a good time when businesses go out of business and we try to get them to remove their signs because some of the language in the zoning related ordinances doesn't refer to things like that. Likely the Planning Office would still be administering the zoning ordinance. We need to do some housekeeping and additional work on the definitions and making sure they are clear and cover everything covered in the zoning. One of the tools they have been contemplating as they imagine how they would move through the rest of the process was one of the recommendations in the Barriers to Housing Report where they were looking at the idea of pursuing the design competition for a housing development in the community starting as soon as possible. Alan Goldman and Doug Zorzi have generously offered that their properties could be one of the subjects of the

design competition and on both of those parcels there has been a lot of work done in the past in a variety of ways on different types of housing that might be proposed there. The advantage of doing it now when we are in this point in the process is the design competition itself could honor through the process some of the barriers or illuminate some of the barriers we have in our zoning now to that type of housing development.

Mr. Bloch said as far as he is concerned doing demonstration housing design is nice. It is like choosing the color of frosting you are going to put on a birthday cake. He is still concerned about the cake and its ingredients. It's way too early to fool around with housing designs.

Mr. Moorman asked Gwen Hallsmith to explain this to the Planning Commission.

Planning Director Gwen Hallsmith said the Barriers to Housing Committee's Report contained that as one of their recommendations for how to address some of the problems that we have with developing more housing in Montpelier. She has outlined what the process is for a design competition, and one of the first elements of that process is defining goals. To design a mixed use development on the Sabin's Pasture property for the purpose of illustrating some of the barriers that might be encountered in the process could be a goal. The goal is to look at actually how housing development goes into Montpelier. She thinks that would help with revising the regulations.

Mr. Anderson said under the proposal what would be the agenda items.

Ms. Hallsmith said they would look for some guidance from the Planning Commission on. They have the draft districts with the outlines of what would be included in the district. One of the districts they haven't yet addressed is the Gateway District. If there are model zoning ordinances we have identified for the Gateway District we include the consideration of those models and proceed as we have been doing.

Mr. Anderson said as far as considering the district but he feels they should visit other parts of the ordinance so they have a sense of where they want to go so they can productively come back to the zoning districts and say this is the way to finalize the zoning districts. A way to proceed that would be consistent with what she is talking about is there going to be some start up on many of the things that are going to require more time. They can be working on the housekeeping things and finalize those. He understands that Clancy keeps a list of parts of the ordinance where he feels people have raised questions and he doesn't have a good answer.

Mr. Moorman said it would be good to hear from Clancy about the issues he intersects with again in the current zoning. He needs some guidance on narrowing the focus.

Mr. DeSmet said some of the sections require less work and some sections need a lot of work. Inclusionary zoning and housing replacement might require some development standards and specific procedures. He is sure certificate of compliance procedures could be done fairly quickly and not much will change. Appeals and variances and enforcement he doesn't think those things will change unless they went to a judicial bureau model.

Ms. Hallsmith said one thing they had talked about was to be able to issue tickets.

Mr. DeSmet replied he would be issuing tickets for zoning violations.

Mr. Cheney said he would like to discuss the Table of Contents. It doesn't give any idea of what the organizational changes are they have in mind.

Mr. Moorman said he didn't find any new or deleted sections but just reorganization.

Mr. DeSmet said he looked at a few ordinances mentioned by this body at some point. He looked at St. Johnsbury and Morrisville and none of them had the definitions. They were usually towards the back.

Mr. Moorman said he didn't think enforcement should be relegated to the back of the book. People should understand when they open it up that this means business. The definitions and enforcement should move up front.

Mr. Cheney said there are a lot of cross references and it is hard to find it sequentially through it.

Mr. DeSmet said one of the goals of the whole revision process has been the district work they have done. Gwen and he thought moving the districts up to the beginning where most people identify themselves was a good starting point. It seems that general procedures and zoning procedures are good. Since the new district regulations have incorporated some of those things it doesn't seem to be a problem to have it now flow the same way.

Mr. Cheney asked if the zoning ordinances in St. Johnsbury and Morrisville were clear and easier to use.

Mr. DeSmet said he is used to what he knows. There is the same level of complexity. Morrisville starts out with the district regulations in the beginning and the definitions in the back.

Ms. Hallsmith replied the goal is to make it more user friendly. If she is doing a development she wants to know what she can do and how to do it.

Ms. Ruth said she likes the idea of the zoning districts and regulations being in the front because that is where people will look and see where they fit in. she also likes the idea of the definitions being up front, and she likes the definitions either before or after the enactment and purposes.

Ms. Hallsmith added the definitions are long.

Ms. Simpson said they are convoluted and need tighter drafting.

Mr. Moorman said they could move the definition section up front or stick it in the back but designate those terms within the code that are defined terms. The reason he likes the definitions up front is because too often they get overlooked if they are in the back. He likes the fact the zoning districts and regulations, which is Article 2, will be up front because that is the map. Everybody wants to see where they live and what applies to them.

Ms. Ruth remarked she would like to see the zoning permit procedures be close to the zoning districts so when you are looking at what district you are in you are also looking at your procedures next. Doing a lot of it chronologically as to when appeals and variances comes up makes sense.

Mr. Anderson said they should shorten the ordinances whenever they can.

Mr. Moorman said they are beginning to identify areas where a subcommittee would be helpful. There could be a subcommittee for definitions, a subcommittee for procedures, and a subcommittee for standards. They could work on the districts as a group. The procedures are fairly entailed and long. At the next meeting they can appoint subcommittees to discuss these topics. He would like to talk about the sign ordinance, whether to keep it or move it out.

Mr. DeSmet said there is a section in the sign ordinance about discontinued businesses but it only applies to design control. Everything outside of design control can leave their signs up for as long as they want and members of the public don't like that. The ordinance is just not user friendly.

Mr. Moorman said Jon passed around a letter to members of the Commission and he would like to hear from Jon about that.

Mr. Anderson said Kim and he met with the neighbors from the Towne Street neighborhood and heard what they said and wrote something which is responsive to their concerns. Kim thinks there is one area we need to revisit.

**Barriers to Housing Report:**

Mr. Bloch said he found it comprehensive. Given the load the Council has on this is it in any way realistic to expect all of the statements to Council will do? He noticed in 2006 and 2011 they talked about only 6 permits being pulled for housing units. People should keep in mind the rather meager production that has gone on in this town and how for years we have talked about 50 units a year. In fact a resolution by the Council used that number. He also likes the problem of a real finance mechanism is needed and the difficulty in creating such is set forth very honestly.

Ms. Hallsmith replied they had 29 new units last year.

Mr. Moorman said his purpose in putting this on the agenda is to make everyone aware of it and have a discussion about it.

Council Member Nancy Sherman was a Council Representative on the committee; Ken Russell, Interim Community Development Specialist attended several of the meetings; Jack McCullough is one of the two co-chairs of the Montpelier Housing Task Force and served on the committee. Council Member Sherman said they met for most of the summer and it was an interesting topic to discuss. There was a diverse and experienced committee that worked with them. They conducted interviews with realtors and developers and there were two representatives from Vermont Law School who were in the environmental studies and land use clinic who did research and brought options that other towns and cities were doing to their attention for them to consider and see how they would fit in Montpelier. There are a number of barriers – some are real and some are perceived and are equally powerful in blocking new housing. One of the most obvious is there are not a lot of pieces of land in the city to develop. There are some very large and very expensive ones but not a lot of single house lots. Economic conditions are certainly a factor. Montpelier land conditions for the land that is open there is a lot of ledge and slope so it isn't like we have vast open fields. They also discovered that people are very interested in having new housing when they think about spreading the tax burden and other burdens, but when they think about giving up their views and what they are accustomed to having around them their attitudes shift. Property taxes came up frequently. Again, we are delighted that our houses are appraised at a high level, especially when some are about to sell them. That can be a burden to buyers. It was clear also that many people who are looking to live in Montpelier appreciate the services and realize that a house in Montpelier at the price they would pay would definitely be lower in another community because of the communities themselves. We definitely need to deal with the idea of property taxes when we look at adding new housing. Regulatory commissions – there are some who said the perception is out there that Montpelier has unreasonable barriers to development and we need to address that. Given economic times and financing that is available seemed to be a barrier as well for many people in the entry or moderate level range.

Mr. McCullough affirmed that is a good overview of how they saw the picture. From there the report goes on to talk about recommendations that the committee makes. On page 2 there are three categories of recommendations that were made. One has to do with marketing the attractiveness of Montpelier to potential residents and developers because everybody on the committee appreciates what a great place Montpelier is to live and thinks other people should see that too. Secondly it relates to financial resources, and third relates to things that could be done to the regulatory environment to make it easier and more predictable to bring new housing into the city. Since the report has come out they have also had a working meeting of the Housing Task Force to go over the report and talk about some of the things they are interested in. There is a substantial overlap between the Housing Task Force and this committee. He said he wanted to talk about the housing design competition. It is a model that has been taken from other cities around the country such as Portland, Oregon. Part of the idea of the housing design competition is not just that we would bring some people in to draw some pretty pictures of what it would be like to have new housing in Montpelier but the housing and design competition would work with owners of developable land and neighbors and city officials to come up with plans that not only would be attractive but also be ready. As they see in the past people fear the unknown or fear what is put in front of them. Sabin's Pasture is an excellent example of that because the initial proposal for development of carpeting the entire 100 acre parcel with urban style housing engendered a tremendous amount of opposition because it reminded everyone of the sprawl developments we have seen in northern New Jersey or Williston and people didn't want that. If we could get to a point where they could have buy-in from the local residents and regulators that would hopefully remove one of the key hurdles and impediments to somebody even making a proposal. We have heard from people that they aren't even going to try to put something in Montpelier because it's just not possible to work with those people. We don't think that's true. The outcome of a design competition would be a showing that a developer can work with those people and if it follows the design proposals it should be something able to be developed.

Council Member Sherman said they could set the criteria so it matched what they need. It seems there is a demand for entry level for smaller families, and certainly there is great interest in high energy efficiency. There is not a lot of available stock in those areas.

Mr. Cheney asked why somebody would enter a competition. What's in it for them?

Mr. McCullough said he understands there has already been an offer of a cash prize.

Council Member Sherman said she thinks they do it because it is an interesting project and a challenge to an architectural student or class because they want to work on this.

Mr. Cheney said they might end up with an x number of proposals for Sabin's Pasture with different styles of housing and organization of the units. What about infill development?

Mr. McCullough replied they talk about infill development and in their proposal relating to the regulatory environment they talk about that. Our law students came in with some proposals in their report.

Mr. Cheney said there should be incentives for not only the person who builds the house but for the neighbors to give up some lots. He can see high density development in some areas that would be very welcome but not in others. The density issue has to do with how far people want to give.

Mr. McCullough said they talked about that. They went through a whole town wide reappraisal in 2010 and heard a lot of appeals of assessment based on the appraisal. One of the components of the appraisal of any parcel of property is what is called the land value and land values are developed on a table developed by the assessor. A piece of land within certain broad perimeters isn't assessed at that much more or less if it varies by size. Two people next door to each other, each of whom turns over a quarter of an acre to open up space in between and to put a new house, might not have their assessment and property taxes go down very far because each lot is a quarter acre smaller than it used to be. The adjoining property would go down. Should we look at the way land is valued to see if tax policies could encourage that system of selling property to a potential owner. In the neighborhood Kim and he live in the houses are far enough part that another house could fit in between.

Ms. Ruth said she is interested in the appendix to the report and the references to the Portland competition and the Portland design standards that are permitted ready. They were small houses and you would have to look at the permeable surface requirements. Creating designs that people could look at would stir up interest in both the whole zoning process and in the concept of infill development, which is probably a lot more profitable for getting community support right now than taking on Sabin's Pasture and the big developments. She would hope they would be focusing on infill that could be used in more parts of the city.

Council Member Sherman said she thought of it more of a housing design rather than a development design, that these groups would put together a house and the guidelines would be based on energy criteria so there is a flexibility.

Mr. Bloch said in Portland they got the local credit union to underwrite the financing so that young couples who were looking for housing and didn't have a lot of cash were able to move in with \$1,500 to \$2,000 the way they structured the loans. He would be excited about the report if it had gone into the depth of financing and what could be done. We need to get banks excited. The northeast is littered with very innovative architects from here to Boston. How are you going to finance them so that people with modest means can afford them?

Ms. Simpson said because of Hurricane Irene there are a lot of activities around the state looking at housing and financing because of the incredible amount of financial need that is available. This will be a good time to go back to financial institutions and talk to them about creative financing because they are already being approached in the context of the Irene recovery. Adjusting policies to support infill and having the design competition is a good idea, but the only concern she has is we need numbers. Infill doesn't give us numbers. If as a community we have a sense of how many people do we want in the community and what kind of demographics do we want to support, and do we want young families in the community, or want people who are boomers and already established who left the state and came back. These are conversations that all have policy implications. Until we can generate some numbers we aren't going to solve the problem, and the problem really became very noticeable after Irene for certain very vulnerable groups but also for people who would not normally consider themselves vulnerable.

Mr. McCullough said he agrees with that. If you think of the maximum infill we can reasonably expect it's not going to generate the number of units we think we need. When the Master Plan was being considered he thought over some reasonable period of time Montpelier could easily support or add 2,000 to the population without doing any violence to all the good things we love about Montpelier. In the Master Plan it makes clear that some of the things we are under utilizing a lot of our infrastructure, including our educational infrastructure. There is real value in having a good percentage of the new development be families who would be using the school system.

Mr. Cheney said Eileen brings up a point that is important to this. We know that building more houses and using infrastructure doesn't lower the taxes.

Council Member Sherman said it takes \$10 million added to the grant list to reduce taxes by a miniscule amount.

Mr. Cheney said it isn't going to make a substantial difference so the whole justification for bringing people in here is if they have kids in the school. You got to get the people with kids in because you get it back in state aid. What you want is young people having kids and get them into the school system because that is really the only way to lower taxes. There is some social utility that with people with low to moderate incomes housing is terrible. It is depressing. The amount of rent these folks could pay you could probably finance a modest house. Yes, there is a lot of money in the credit union but you can't give it away. You are in an economic environment where you have to make some reasonable return on what you loan out, and right now the margins are so small there are no margins. The whole economic issue isn't just the availability of credit but the economy we are in, and unless that changes it is going to hard to spend their money.

Mr. McCullough said one of the things they have talked about is they are positioned to be putting things in place so that as the economy comes back we are poised to take advantage of that.

Mr. Anderson said one of the best things for the downtown would be to redevelop the upper floors of the Dickey Block. He thinks that could be possible but it would take somebody knocking on Aubuchon's door and saying they had a proposal for them because their business is selling hardware.

Mr. McCullough said he agrees that would be a great place for housing but then there are a whole different set of questions of what kind of housing it is. There are some cities where the upper floors of downtowns are attractive condo housing for affluent people who really want to be in the center of the community. Another attractive idea is to have it be good housing who can't afford housing elsewhere who don't need a car.

Council Member Sherman replied two factors are sprinklers and elevator. The city has addressed the sprinkler issue by bringing a high pressure water main in but the critical need is someone who will redevelop it.

Mr. Anderson said at one point he had walked around the city and come to the conclusion there might be as many as 80 units simply if you took carriage houses in the city and redeveloped them. In terms of the Planning Commission allowing that to happen we need to educate people that this could happen. He feels as a Planning Commission Member right now that his number one obligation and responsibility is to make sure we have a good zoning ordinance proposed to the City Council within a relatively short time. Design competitions may be good, but he is going to advocate that the energy of the Commission be focused on the zoning ordinance.

Council Member Sherman said they want the housing competition to reflect the new zoning ordinance.

Mr. Russell asked if Mr. Anderson had any thoughts on the housing preservation ordinances.

Mr. Anderson said our Master Plan calls for us to allow mixed use in the inner city area. He worries that if they allow that to happen they will lose housing because that is why they adopted CB-II previously. The Cancer Society redeveloped on Loomis Street and that is now the Humanities Council. You could have an office in high density residential area. The concern was we would lose all of our housing so they adopted CB-II to channel office development and shut down office development in high density residential. That has been pretty successful. The current thinking is we ought to have mixed use. In order to have the mixed use it is clear to him they need to have some sort of housing budget. The person doing the conversion to something else has to provide the housing unit. If they work it out so they are providing the housing units then the conversion can happen. If the housing

units are not being provided the converter has to provide them. It is a budget ordinance combined with a housing replacement ordinance.

Mr. McCullough said there is a memo from him about some ordinances that could be adopted, including housing preservation and housing replacement and a demolition ordinance. If we had it 30 years ago things would look different in downtown Montpelier than they do now. We don't have a statewide or local housing inspection and code enforcement program and we really need that. The committee focused on barriers to development of housing, but if we address barriers to development while we still lose housing because people are letting it fall apart we aren't getting anywhere. One of their suggestions is adopting and creating a code enforcement program that would actually work.

Council Member Sherman replied we do have one and just recently a multi-unit house on Sibley Avenue was given an occupancy approval. You still walk up a little gang plank to get to the front door and only the family can live there, but that is a property for at least 10 years hammered on regularly and it has come around. How much does the building inspection program cost? Can you with fees and penalties support it? She believes you cannot. To grow that and to keep it going and to recognize it is a critical part of the whole picture is definitely needed.

Mr. Bloch said they should have a robust housing inspection program and fund it because it is part of the quality of life in the community. It is a direct correlation between health and safety.

Mr. Moorman said the Planning Commission is going to break into subcommittees and one of the committees is focusing on the procedural components of our existing bylaws. He wondered if they could comment about the streamline approval process.

Ms. Hallsmith said in Massachusetts there is an ordinance called a comprehensive permit ordinance that applies to developments that are doing affordable housing and it basically allows for a consolidated review of those proposals where both the state and the local regulations are all put into one review committee. It would need legislative approval. She thinks it would be worth looking into legally if there was a way to expedite and facilitate affordable housing development under our current ordinance and do some consolidation here. It has been a very effective way of getting affordable housing built in Massachusetts on some timelines.

Mr. Moorman asked if we need clear standards.

Council Member Sherman said the notion that the boards are there to support housing and there are often people who arrive who are there to prohibit housing and how to let their voices be heard but move the process on so that the importance of new housing and new

development is apparent to all. The shift that happens when your view might be blocked and the short term responses.

Mr. McCullough said one of the things he has seen over the years in Montpelier is an impediment to development in housing. People come in to regulatory bodies and raise all kinds of objections that are not actually legal objections to development, but because there are a lot of them there and they put pressure on the members of the body they either get their way or intimidate potential developers into withdrawing a proposal even though it is a proposal that should by rights be approved under our ordinance. If the regulatory bodies don't know they certainly should listen to the members of the public who come before them, but if a conforming proposal is made they have an obligation to approve it,, then that's a problem.

Mr. Anderson said it would be his impression that since the environmental court was beefed up that local boards are much better at applying the law and following the law because they know if someone wants to take it to the environmental court the court will follow the law.

Ms. Hallsmith said some of the things she has taken from the feedback tonight is the importance of infill. She would still like to pursue the design competition as they are revising the ordinance instead of waiting until it is done because that could instruct us. We should have it apply to infill development as well.

Lori Pinard, a local real estate agent, said she is confused about Kim's comment that bringing a couple thousand units won't really make any money. Ultimately, the people building those 2,00 houses and the families that move into them they need to have their teeth checked, need to buy clothes, buy paint and get carpet. They need to work. They will all be making money and spending money and causing commerce and being able to afford to buy a better houses and move out of the rat trap apartment houses if there are any. The landlords will automatically need to make adjustments to their housing in order to re-rent them to somebody else who isn't going to buy one of these houses. Part of the plan needs to be to figure out a way to incentivize private development and not just subsidized nonprofit affordable housing units. When the economy gets good again and there is a piece of land available you can bet the owners if they have somebody who wants to come in and develop the properties with 4,000 square foot houses because the builders who were in this area and all went to Williston will want to develop again. She is confused about the statement that bringing more housing isn't a money maker.

Mr. Cheney said it doesn't reduce the property taxes.

Miss Pinard say it may not but the commerce that provides and allows it may not stink so much to pay for the city services that are out there. There would have to be a pretty big incentive for her to want to sell off her privacy. The other thing was about the financing not being available. There actually is money out there. The banks are not letting it go easily, but

there are first-time home buyer programs, especially with new construction. VHFA has money at 3.5 percent now.

Mr. Anderson said it is really important to understand what Ms. Pinard is saying. Some people say we can grow so many housing units in the city that we won't ever have to raise the tax rate again. You can grow the city somewhat so you have to raise the tax rate less, but he doesn't think you can put enough units on the ground in a year so you don't have to raise the tax rate to keep up with inflation. Jack's idea of 2,000 people may be a good one. That would be roughly 1,000 new units. If we did that over 20 years, which would be aggressive, that would be 50 units a year. 50 units a year at \$250,000 per unit is \$12 million a year you add to the grand list. Our grand list is over \$800 million. Growing housing units is a good thing because people need housing, and for all of the other reason we talked about we don't want to overstate the goal.

Mr. Bloch said you have stable communities and households. They need to eat and clothe themselves and buy ancillary products to run their households. If you had 2,000 more people here in the market basket you might see more activity in the types of small businesses that would want to relocate to Montpelier.

Ms. Hallsmith responded by saying that the grand list isn't the only element of our municipal funding structure that is impacted by development. We obviously sell water and sewer services to people who move in and those are also high priced services right now that could be improved if we had more users on the system. Of course, with the revised education funding system it's a different scenario than when the build your way out studies were done 30 years ago. Right now we are paid for students. Even though the grand list might not change a lot the number of students in the school might and that could actually have a very stabilizing effect on our taxes. There are a number of different municipal services that would benefit.

Mr. Anderson said he doesn't think they can every grow the city fast enough that it will solve all of the problems.

Council Member Sherman said one of the recommendations was that a lot of people don't know all of the financial plans and programs available and some sort of seminar to bring banks and investors together with people looking for mortgage money so you know about the incentives for accessory apartments or you know the advantages you get if you invest in putting a sprinkler system in, or you know the mortgage plans for new home buyers.

John Bloch said home buyers are very shy right now because they don't trust banks and have seen the carnage the banks have left in their wake. They are right on education.

Mr. Moorman said at a later meeting he would like to have a more focused discussion about infill.

**Other Business:**

There is another grant available through the National Endowment of the Arts called the “Our Town Grant.” It is due March 1<sup>st</sup>. They are still exploring all of the requirements and what would be involved. There is a requirement that we have a local cultural partner that would serve with us as part of the grant activities. There are a number of different activities that are considered eligible, including the idea of developing a cultural district. Since they have been looking at the River Arts District as a way to revitalize that area as well as to promote some of the creative economy activities we have in the community her attention was peaked by the possibility of doing the grant. She has set up a meeting with Vermont College for the Fine Arts next week. It is a one to one match and match can include in-kind. It is for two years of activities and it can be from anywhere from \$25,000 to \$150,000. The match would double that. The grant is for enhancing a community’s cultural and creative economy. It’s about growing that sector of your local economy and using the arts to revitalize a community. The idea of cultural district planning and increasing employment in the arts sector would be included. If you look at the Master Plan under the economic development portion increasing the employment and jobs that are available in the creative sector is one of the top goals.

The second idea is about putting on a town meeting about economic development in March. We typically have been doing town meetings for the community. We did one on energy in 2007, one on transportation in 2008, one on housing in 2009, and all of those have resulted in important initiatives in the city. Right now she thinks there is a lot of interest locally in economic development and understanding it better. George Malek said he was enthusiastic about this idea and the Chamber of Commerce would support it. Some of the new economy initiatives are also quite interesting. We usually do it in March at the same time as Town Meeting.

Mr. Anderson said he thought a Town Meeting would be wonderful to roll out the near final zoning ordinance but he doesn’t think they will be ready to do that in March.

Mr. Moorman said our business number one is getting the zoning ordinance drafted.

Mr. Cheney said he liked the idea of a conversation because it will inform the audience and it will be fun.

Ms. Hallsmith reminded them they just did receive the grant to have some additional assistance from the Regional Planning Commission.

Mr. Moorman said he has questions about the design competition, the grant and the town meeting. When the main business is getting the zoning ordinance done, are we dividing our resources too thin? He thinks the Commission wants to be pretty aggressive in how quickly they get into the other components of the bylaw. That is all he wants to focus on.

**Future Agenda Items:**

They are going to talk about subcommittees at the next meeting. The other item will be Clancy's edits of some of the more finer pieces of the existing code. We haven't had a second look at the Gateway District and then look at all six together at a later meeting. The next meeting is January 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Ms. Ruth and Mr. Anderson the Planning Commission adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen Hallsmith, Director  
Planning & Community Development

Transcribed by: Joan Clack