

TOWN OF HIGHGATE

Planning Commission

March 17, 2015 @ 6pm

Approved Minutes

NOTE: All actions taken are unanimous unless otherwise stated.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Rick Trombley opened up the meeting @ 6:05pm .
Present were: Planning Commission Board Members; Rick Trombley, Woody Rouse, Luc Dupuis, Larry Simmons. Absent- Bruce Ryan.
Also present were: Heidi Britch-Valenta – Planning & Zoning Administrator; Wendi Dusablon – Clerk; Amanda Holland – NRPC.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Amanda was running a few minutes late, so Rick amended the agenda to approve the minutes first. Motion by Rick Trombley to approve the minutes from January 12, 2015 as corrected. Motion was seconded by Woody Rouse – **APPROVED.**

III. CAPITAL BUDGET

Amanda arrived and gave an update on the Capital Budget process. In November and December, Amanda, Heidi and Tom met with department heads and got information on equipment we have and what the needs are for the future. Amanda then met with Tom in January to get a history of town budgets and a feel for how the last few years have gone. It will be a change to bring everything into one place and will be a tight timeline. We have grant money to use through the end of May. Amanda will continue to work with Heidi and Tom and she will come back to the PC to discuss some policies in terms of bonding and capital improvement plans. Some public outreach and educational outreach will need to happen with the different town boards and departments.

IV. TOWN PLAN

It was noted that we will have a time crunch to come up with the town plan, as our current plan expires in July. We are applying for an ADA grant to better utilize the space in the town building, which requires a current town plan. The town plan is currently done every five years, but there is a proposal to move it to every eight or ten years. This proposal won't make it in this legislative session. There are no real substantial changes to the town plan, so far. Heidi has contacted the school board chair and principal about the educational piece of the plan, she has not heard back yet. For police protection, Highgate contracts with FCSO for 40 hours per week of coverage. Larry noted that this plan is being passed in 2015 yet there is data regarding emergency services calls from 2012. Heidi had some updated data from the fire department, they have 23 firefighters and 3 cadets. Amanda will look into the data in the town report for FCSO and VSP as well as MVR. The group had some other modifications regarding the Historical Society Museum, Rail Trail, LVRT, Canoe Trail, and the Historic Foot Bridge in Highgate Falls – all of these should be included on the map in the transportation section. Heidi would also like it noted that Highgate is working on our first segment of sidewalks from St. Louis Church, to the public library over to the town office building. This will hopefully eventually lead to a crosswalk over towards the elementary school. The group had

questions about continuing education vs. adult learning and what the difference was. MVR is no longer a volunteer organization, so that will be noted in the plan. The town pays them handsomely for their services. Fletcher Allen Health Care is now called University of Vermont Medical Center. It should also be mentioned that Highgate now has a constable. Amanda asked for clarification on the constables duties within the community. Under the fire department section, it should be noted a new custom cab utility truck has been purchased in 2015 and the van was retired. In the section about water / wastewater / storm water the section about conversion of seasonal to year round dwellings should be taken out, as the state deals with all septic permitting now. Throughout the plan, where ever it says Highgate Center, it should say Highgate Village. It should also be noted the town joined the NWSWD in 2014. We were also just approved to shift to custodial care of the capped landfill. We no longer have to do annual testing. Our new brush depot should also be added, as we have two approved sites for categorical waste such as leaves and limbs. One is for public use and one is for municipal use. Larry had some questions and comments with regard to impact fees and how we should have a bullet point under each section. This would leave it wide open for how we would use any funds. Amanda will add something in the implementation plan to cover everything. Heidi and Amanda agreed this was a good point. In the town offices section, the listers were omitted from the list of people inside the building, that needs to be fixed. An energy efficient grant was used to install lighting in 2011. Insulation was installed at the town bldg. and a new HVAC system was installed in 2013. With regard to the ADA grant, we need a plan to best utilize the space we have. The section on fire protection could be broken into two sections: services & facilities. Larry thinks that in the future, the highway department could also be broken out as its own entity as well as the fire department. The town offices would stand alone as their own section in the town plan. The library will be one of our next urgent needs after the arena. The library has outgrown its current location. RL Vallee has offered to purchase it, but they do not have another location yet. Under recreation, our arena is currently under construction for the new ice making system. Heidi will send Amanda some stats on the arena. Some already completed projects at the arena are the new heating system, new flooring in lobby, new dehumidification system and new scoreboard. In November we passed a \$990,000 bond vote and we also have a HUD grant for \$196,000 which needs to be used by September. Also under recreation, the Town of Highgate is working with the State of VT on the Highgate Cliffs Natural Area to develop a management plan to be able to use the site. The timeline to adopt the town plan will be tight if we are aiming for a July adoption. The PC meetings in April and May we will have a lot to cover to get it all done. Amanda asked that the PC show up to the April 21st meeting with a list of questions or edits to save time. The section on all hazards resiliency will also be adapted to fit into our plan, the text was adopted from our Hazard Mitigation plan. We are required by statute to address flooding issues. Heidi also noted that the zoning bylaws are now called the Highgate Development Regulations and will become effective on March 26th. We have also eliminated the office of town auditor and will be replacing that with a yearly outside audit. Tom would also like to develop a finance committee. Amanda passed out a new section for the PC to review before April 21st and come prepared with questions, comments and edits.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

- The Selectboard has approved a stipend increase for the PC & DRB, effective January 1, 2015 to \$20.00 per meeting.
- There are two current openings on the PC. Letters of interest should be submitted to Heidi.

- Rick thanked Julie Rice and Tim Reynolds for serving on the PC.
- Motion by Woody Rouse to nominate Rick Trombley as Chair of the PC. Motion was seconded by Larry Simmons – **APPROVED**. Motion by Rick Trombley to nominate Woody Rouse as Vice-Chair of the PC. Motion was seconded by Luc Dupuis – **APPROVED**.

VI. UPCOMING EVENTS

- | | | |
|------------|-----------|----------------------|
| • March 19 | 7pm | Selectboard Mtg. |
| • April 1 | by 4:30pm | Dog licenses are due |
| • April 2 | 7pm | Selectboard Mtg. |
| • April 9 | 6pm | DRB Mtg. |

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Rick Trombley to adjourn the meeting @ 8:44pm. Motion was seconded by Woody Rouse – **APPROVED**.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

_____, Clerk
Wendi Dusablon
Date _____

Minutes approved by:

_____, PC, Chair
Richard Trombley
Date _____