

TOWN OF HIGHGATE
Planning Commission Mtg.
January 15, 2019 @ 6pm

Approved Minutes

NOTE: All actions taken are unanimous unless otherwise stated.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Luc Dupuis, Chair, opened up the meeting @ 6:11pm

Present for this meeting were:

Planning Commission Board Members; Luc Dupuis – Chair;
Ken Thompson; Richard J. Noel *absent – Bruce Ryan and Tom Conley*
Town of Highgate Staff: Heidi Britch-Valenta – Town Administrator &
Planner; Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk
Public / Other: Sharon Bousquet

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Richard Noel to approve the minutes from November 20, 2018, as written. The motion was seconded by Luc Dupuis – **APPROVED.**

III. PROJECT UPDATES

- Heidi notified the board that Anna Roberts has given her notice as our Zoning Administrator. It is a function of the Planning Commission to hire a replacement. The job has been posted and applications are due by Jan. 31st. A hiring committee will need to be formed and meet to review the applications. The PC would like to have a few members of the DRB participate this round as well. The hiring committee will meet Feb. 5th to review applications received by the deadline. Heidi will reach out to DRB members to participate.
- The CIP that the PC worked on in November has gone before the Selectboard. It remains at \$450,000.00 and will now go before the voters on Town Meeting Day, March 5th.
- Thursday, Jan. 17th the Village Core Master Plan (VCMP) Committee and our consultants will present concepts for the former Machia Property. This will become a huge planning project for our town, so it would be beneficial to have PC members at the meeting this Thursday @ 7pm.

IV. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The VCMP will be laying down the foundation for the former Machia property project but many decisions will lie ahead. At this point it makes sense for us to dig deeper into economic development and learn more to understand if the PC is enough to move the project forward, or if we need to pull in other boards to create an economic development steering committee. NorthWest Regional Planning Commission can come in and do a presentation and discuss economic development. They can provide us with information to manage growth and other strategies. NRPC will be at our March 19th meeting. If it makes sense after that, Heidi can invite Richard Amore' with the Village Designation Program to attend in April to help us learn about incentives for the project. After Town Meeting Day we will have a better idea of what people are thinking and feeling on a lot of topics, the Machia Property (VCMP) project included. The Steinhour Café building will be coming down in early 2019 and all the studies and information from the charrettes also show us that the old hotel building also has to go.

V. MUNICIPAL OPEN HOUSE

We have previously held two open houses, hosted by the PC. Last year it was held in February prior to Town Meeting Day. We had a fair amount of people show up, however most of them were already members of current town boards and committees. There was discussion on the goals and objectives of hosting an open house. It was decided to wait until after some 2019 projects are complete (roof replacement, ADA modifications, and Machia Road Bridge) to host the open house in late summer or early fall. This could possibly be a BBQ or an event in the town park as well and we could incorporate some fun events. There will also be more information available regarding the Machia property (VCMP) by this time as well. Given there will not be an open house in February, Heidi will see if NRPC can come to the February 19th meeting instead.

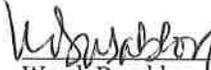
VI. MISC. UPDATES

- Luc has completed and submitted the PC report for the town report.
- The 2019 PC meeting schedule will remain the third Tuesday of each month.
- There will be a presentation this Saturday, Jan. 19th @ 10:30am, at the Enosburg Falls Methodist Church. The topic will be what it takes to join a town or school board. Our very own Sharon Bousquet will be one of the guest speakers. A free lunch will also be included.
- Luc asked if the Efficiency Vermont workshop will be rescheduled. It was supposed to happen last fall and Efficiency Vermont did not show up. This has not been rescheduled.
- There was discussion on tax rates, agriculture and how much has changed in our town over the last several decades. Richard expressed frustration with what our agricultural community is going through and there is nothing that we can really do to reverse it. Small farms are more and more becoming a thing of the past, which is very unfortunate.
- A draft of the town report will be going to the printers by this Friday. 2018 town reports should be available for pick up by early February.

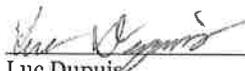
VII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Richard Noel to adjourn the meeting @ 7:06pm. The motion was seconded by Ken Thompson – **APPROVED.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by:


Wendi Dusablon, Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk 2/19/19
Date

Minutes approved by:


Luc Dupuis, Planning Comm. – Chair 2/19/19
Date