

**TOWN OF HIGHGATE**  
**Planning Commission Mtg.**  
**August 18, 2020 @ 6pm**  
**Approved Minutes**

*NOTE: All actions taken are unanimous unless otherwise stated.*

ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE / PHONE CONFERENCE / IN-PERSON MTG.

**JOIN ZOOM MEETING**

**<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/86780443829>**

**JOIN BY FREE CONFERENCE CALL**

**DIAL IN NUMBER 425-436-6365 ACCESS CODE 188557**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Luc Dupuis opened up the meeting @ 6:09pm. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, changes to open meeting law allowed for this meeting to take place by various means: Zoom video / phone / in person.

**Planning Commission Board Members;** Luc Dupuis (Zoom); Tom Conley (in person); Ken Thompson (Zoom); Bruce Ryan (Zoom)

*Absent – Scott Bessette*

**Town of Highgate Staff:** Heidi Britch-Valenta – Town Administrator & Planner (in person); Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk (Zoom)

**Public / Other:** Richard Flint (in person @ 6:28pm)

**II. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL**

Motion by Bruce Ryan to approve the minutes from June 16, 2020, as written. The motion was seconded by Tom Conley – **APPROVED.**

**III. USDA RBDG ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING FUNDS**

We did receive the USDA Business Development Grant, but for a lesser amount than anticipated. We have accepted the \$15,000.00 to begin working with the DRB and Selectboard (and whomever else) to start reviewing economic development planning documents (examples: impact fees and a TIF district). The scope of work is in the packet which explains what we will have to do. We have not received a contract yet so we can't do much other than percolate on exactly what we would like to do. We should have a contract by the next meeting. We will then be able to issue an RFP for a consultant to work with. We will need to maximize the \$15,000.00 that we did get, which was half of what we applied for. Working with a consultant will also require public meetings.

**IV. OTHER BUSINESS & UPDATES**

- The Village Core Master Plan Committee is in the middle of a wastewater study and they have selected two sites they think are the most practical and fruitful in the village. There is a town owned property between Mill Hill and Lamkin Street (known as Pine Forest or the Griswold Property). The

other is the sand pit owned by Roger Wright on Lamkin Street. Mr. Wright is agreeable to the idea of having test pits dug there. Currently NRPC has hired UVM to do an archeological assessment before we can dig any test pits. This will be followed by a desk top review to let us know if more digging is required. In September the VCMP meeting will focus on a 90% draft review of the report. The VCMP and PC should stay connected to this project.

- At the last VCMP meeting the committee heard about an opportunity for up to \$125,000.00 in funding with complete loan forgiveness at the end. The VCMP voted to proceed and pursue these funds, as it is first come – first served. They will be going to the Selectboard for permission to move forward after we have more of the wastewater study info available.
- VCMP was originally going to apply for a Municipal Planning Grant (MPG) but things have gotten shuffled. VCMP is now looking at a larger grant opportunity – a Public Facilities Planning Grant. This is similar to what was used for the airport study. The advantage to the Public Facilities Planning Grant is that in-kind hours can be used from our volunteer boards and also from Heidi. The MPG is now before the Recreation Commission. They are interested, but the timing is not good, as we currently do not have a Recreation Director. Heidi spoke with Greta at NRPC and she said we could match it with our USDA Planning Grant to give us more money. We had originally asked for \$30,000.00 and received \$15,000.00 from Rural Development so we could ask MPG for \$15,000.00 as well. The two grants serve as match for each other. This gives us an opportunity to get back up to \$30,000.00 which is what we had originally applied for. If we go this route, the applications are due Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>. There will be a public hearing involved that needs to be properly noticed so we need to move on this soon if the PC is interested. Motion by Luc Dupuis to move forward with a recommendation to the Selectboard to pursue and apply for these additional grant funds. The motion was seconded by Ken Thompson – **APPROVED**. The resolution needs to be signed by Luc (PC, Chair), as well as by the Selectboard. Heidi will stop by Luc's house on her way home from this meeting.
- Heidi provided a spread sheet in the packet with grant updates.
- NRPC will be at the Selectboard meeting on Aug. 20<sup>th</sup> to talk about the Communications Union District. The Governor signed H.958 to allow municipalities to form a CUD by a vote of the governing body at a regular open meeting during the state of emergency. This is in an effort to bring high-quality, high-speed and reliable internet access to communities in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. There is no direct cost to taxpayers. The funds used are not tax based, they are revenue based.
- There is a schedule and maps in the packet and they have also been posted on the town's FaceBook page regarding treatment in Missisquoi Bay and the Missisquoi River for lamprey. The week of Sept. 28<sup>th</sup> is on the schedule for the Highgate and Swanton areas. During the days leading up to and following the treatment, the water in the advisory areas can not be used for drinking, domestic use, fishing, swimming, irrigation or livestock watering.
- The Selectboard has been working with the State, Swanton Village, Jim Harrison and others on extending water and sewer infrastructure to the airport. We submitted a grant application to Northern Borders for \$1

million and were awarded \$507,107.76 but we don't have the official written notice. The Selectboard has accepted the reduced amount. There is background info on this project in the packet. The Selectboard had a site visit to the airport on Aug. 6<sup>th</sup> @ 5pm. Richard Flint reported that the State of VT and Mr. Harrison have some negotiating to work through. Heidi added that there will be several sit-down meetings in the future to work through all the details.

- The Zoning Administrator job is posted until Friday, Aug. 21<sup>st</sup>. The PC is the board responsible for making a recommendation to the Selectboard. In the past they have involved a few members of the DRB as well. Shelley is collecting applications and Wendi noted we did receive one this week that she is aware of. Tuesday nights work well for the PC to hold interviews.

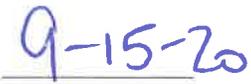
V. **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Bruce Ryan to adjourn the PC meeting @ 6:42pm. The motion was seconded by Tom Conley – **APPROVED.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_, Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk

Wendi Dusablon

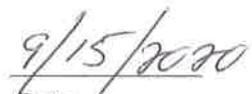


Date

Minutes approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_, Planning Commission, Chair

Luc Dupuis, Chair



Date