

**TOWN OF HIGHGATE**  
**Planning Commission**  
**April 18, 2023 @ 6pm**  
**APPROVED MINUTES**

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

**Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83352151345>**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Luc Dupuis called the meeting to order @ 6:00pm. This meeting was a hybrid of in-person and Zoom.

**Planning Commission Board Members:** Luc Dupuis – Chair; Tom Conley; Robyn Klein; Scott Bessette (arrived @ 6:03pm) (ALL WERE IN-PERSON) *absent – Ken Thompson*

**Town of Highgate Staff:** Heidi Britch-Valenta – Town Administrator;  
Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk (BOTH WERE IN-PERSON)

**Public / Other:** In-person: Emily Klofft, NRPC; Richard Flint @ 6:05pm; Sharon Bousquet @ 6:28pm On Zoom: None

The order of the agenda was re-arranged until all board members had arrived.

**II. TOWN PLAN AMENDMENT HEARING**

Emily Klofft from NorthWest Regional Planning (NRPC) was present. There were no members of the public present, aside from two Selectboard members, Richard and Sharon. The PC has been working on the draft of the Town Plan for a long period of time, and we are nearing the time to formally adopt it. Heidi has spoken with Emily and Greta at NRPC about the fact that we have agreed to hold a hearing to hear more about the proposed district zone change in the area of the former brick plant. This zoning district change would potentially change the land use map within our bylaws and town plan. Emily and Greta both thought if we bring that forward as a potential change and we ultimately approve the district change from Agricultural to Industrial / Commercial, we can modify the map without another town plan amendment after-the-fact. The other two hearings for the Town Plan will be with the Selectboard in June and July. We can potentially get this back on the next PC hearing. Emily further explained the process and the timing. The zoning district change only requires one hearing before the Selectboard, the Town Plan requires two. The Town Plan update has two minor alterations to the designation of land area in Highgate. These are in the Airport Overlay District and in the Flood Plain Overlay District. There was discussion on the FEMA flood plain maps and following FEMA's standards, as well as zoning bylaws that would be affected to comply with FEMA standards. The PC is interested in having a joint meeting with the Selectboard and DRB regarding the bylaw update. Scott asked if a conditional use permit would serve the purpose in place of a zoning district change in the area of the former brick plant. ACT250 was discussed as part of this conversation. The proposed zoning district change (fully discussed at the last meeting on 3/21/23) does serve the town's intentions, as a designated phase two portion of the water / sewer infrastructure extension project. Robyn was brought up to speed on this project as well as a few others. Motion by Scott Bessette to allow for modifications to future land use maps based on intentions to expand the Industrial / Commercial district. The motion was seconded by Robyn Klein – **APPROVED**. Motion by Tom Conley to forward the Town Plan to the Selectboard for further review and for public hearings as part of their meetings. The motion was seconded by Robyn Klein – **APPROVED**.

### III. RE-ORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD

Motion by Scott Bessette to nominate Luc Dupuis as Chair of the Planning Commission. The motion was seconded by Robyn Klein. There were no other nominations – **APPROVED**. Motion by Tom Conley to nominate Scott Bessette as Vice-Chair of the Planning Commission. The motion was seconded by Robyn Klein. There were no other nominations – **APPROVED**.

### IV. OTHER BUSINESS

- Greta from NRPC was unable to join us again this month for the Bylaw Modernization Grant Project. Ideally it will be back on the agenda for May. Emily explained that this project has gone much slower than they wanted. Heidi asked about possible extensions at the end if we go past the deadline. Emily wasn't sure about the deadline being extended but is hopeful we will get back on schedule with the project.
- Heidi provided updates on many projects happening in town: Water / Sewer Infrastructure project to the airport district; Village Core Master Plan; Transfer Station Slope Stabilization; Machia Road Stabilization; FEMA Grant at 28 Mill Hill Road.
- Residents of Quarry Lane will be at the Selectboard meeting on April 20<sup>th</sup> to appeal the decision of the Selectboard to take over that road. The Selectboard declined this request earlier this year. Scott brought up the topic of impact fees and feels that discussion goes hand-in-hand with taking over roads.
- A joint meeting with the PC, SLB, and DRB was again brought up to discuss the bylaws, as well as topics like impact fees, taking over roads, and other issues that should be added to our bylaws. More info will come forward as we continue the Bylaw Modernization Project with regard to affordable housing, elderly housing, tax rates, etc. NRPC will also be a good resource for us, but they are overwhelmed with projects right now and having a hard time keeping up.
- Ken Thompson has resigned as a member of the PC. His last meeting with us will be in May. A thank you letter to Ken was circulated and signed. We need to start the search for a PC member to replace him.
- There is information in the packet regarding the Port of Entry Project (Customs / Border Protection).
- There was discussion on police coverage. The Town of Highgate will contract with SAPD until June 2024. Robyn had questions about the Constable position.
- Heidi has submitted her letter of resignation to the town after eleven years. Her last full week will be the week of May 1<sup>st</sup>. She will stay on with us part-time after that as a transitional period. The Town Administrator position was posted today to the public. She will be close by, working for Swanton Village, so we will likely see her and work with her on various projects.
- There are still a few positions open on various boards / committees. Please submit letters of interest to Wendi at wdusablon@highgatevt.org or stop by the office. Open positions include: Listers Office (1) / NorthWest Regional Planning Reps (2) / Planning Commission (1) / Transportation Advisory Committee Rep (1) / Communications Union District Reps (3).
- Sharon reminded everyone to lock your doors/windows and to remain vigilant and be safe. There is an extremely high number of illegal border crossings happening across the region.

### V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

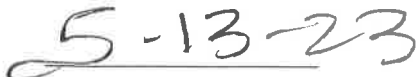
Motion by Robyn Klein to approve the minutes from March 21, 2023, as written. The motion was seconded by Tom Conley – **APPROVED**.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Scott Bessette to adjourn the PC meeting @ 7:21pm. The motion was seconded by Tom Conley – **APPROVED.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

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

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Minutes approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Luc Dupuis, Planning Commission Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date