

Any questions, comments or concerns about the minutes should be addressed to Amy Giroux, Zoning Administrator at (802) 868-3325

**MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
SWANTON PLANNING COMMISSION
Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
Wednesday, May 18, 2022 @ 6:00 p.m.**

Present: Ed Daniel, Chair; Ross Lavoie, Vice Chair; Oliver Manning, Andy LaRocque, Heather Buczkowski, Members; Amy Giroux, Zoning Administrator; Joseph Cava, Administrative Assistant; Greta Brunswick, Northwest Regional Planning Commission

*All motion carried unanimously unless specified otherwise.

1. Call to Order – Mr. Daniel called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.
2. Agenda Review
3. Review of minutes of March 16, 2022 and April 27, 2022

Mr. Manning made a motion to approve the draft minutes from the 3/16/22 and 4/27/22 Planning Commission meetings, seconded by Ms. Buczkowski. Motion carried.

a) Acceptance of the Planning Grant

Ms. Giroux reminded the Planning Commission that they received \$17,600.00 in Municipal Planning Grant funds from Northwest Regional Planning Commission. Mr. Daniel added this is in addition to the \$2,000.00 that the Town Selectboard approved for the Planning Commission to revise the municipal plan.

Mr. Lavoie made a motion to accept the funds from the Northwest Regional Planning Commission and the Town Selectboard totaling \$19,600.00, seconded by Mr. Manning. Motion carried.

4. Public Comment

a) Administrators Report

Ms. Giroux gave a report of issuances for the beginning of May including eight building permits, nine certificates of compliance and one certificate of occupancy.

5. Northwest Regional Planning – Greta – RFP

Ms. Brunswick described a municipal plan as a goal for the future, adding that proposals are key in the planning process to hire a consultant. Ms. Giroux asked how we hire a consultant? Ms. Brunswick said the RFP should be submitted by June 1, to get a

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consultant on board. Mr. Daniel described the goals for the planning commission to address in the new municipal plan including the Southern Growth District, water and sewer infrastructure and low-income/senior housing.

Ms. Brunswick recommended viewing the municipal plans available for Fairfield, Fairfax, and Alburgh on the Northwestern Regional Planning Commission's website. These would be good examples to fit Swanton's demographic and population. Ms. Brunswick added that Berlin's Municipal Plan won an award and recommended basing Swanton's new plan on it to start as a foundation. The final recommendation was to make the plan less repetitive to encourage action steps. Integrate the relevant points in the community visit to the relevant sections of the municipal plan.

6. Municipal Plan Audit – Planning Commission Recommendations

a) Acknowledgements

Move from the front of the municipal plan book to the back or add it to the front title page and get rid of the acknowledgement section entirely.

b) Forward

Needs to be updated to match the scope of the Town. The forward should also be condensed to one page.

c) Chapter 1 – Introduction

Take out community vision in the last sentence of paragraph 2 on page 9 and revise paragraph to exclude community visit. Revise to give strong support for future municipal plan revisions.

d) Chapter 2 – Background

Missisquoi River overflowed in 2018 and we should look at building standards in congruence with state/national flood standards.

e) Chapter 3 – Swanton Today

Update population figures and equate the average value of real estate in a post-COVID environment. Ms. Giroux reminded the board that the recent sale of Giordano Manor and conversion to a single-family home has left a void in Swanton for assisted living. This raised the idea incentivizing business operations with tax breaks for specified number of beds in assisted living units.

The discussion then led into the Southern Growth District and the water/sewer management plan that ties in with future business development and housing. Mr. Manning expressed the need for a well-developed plan folded in with the

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municipal plan for how to achieve formal developments in the Southern Growth District. Overall, Mr. Lavoie recommended removing the fluff and placing a larger focus on the Southern Growth District and downtown area.

7. Set next Planning Commission meeting date

Wednesday, May 25, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

8. Public Comment (Reprise) - None

9. Any Other Necessary Business

a) Public Use of Private Land

Mr. Lavoie called for revisions to the definition of different agricultural businesses to build an agricultural structure without needing to pay for a permit. If farms and large-scale commercial garden centers are unpermitted then why are family agricultural operations permitted? Mr. Daniel recommended continuing this as an agenda item at the next planning commission meeting.

10. Adjournment – Mr. Manning made a motion adjourn the meeting at 8:03 p.m., seconded by Mr. LaRocque. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitting,

Joseph Cava
Administrative Assistant

Ed Daniel, Chair

Ross Lavoie, Vice Chair

Andy LaRocque

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Oliver Manning

Heather Buczkowski