

Bristol Planning Commission
October 30, 2018 meeting
Holley Hall, municipal offices/meeting room

Meeting Minutes (**Draft**)

PC members present: Katie Raycroft Meyer (chair), Bill Brown, Anna Daylor (vice-chair), Mark Gibson, Rob Rooker, Bill Sayre

Additional Attendees: Kris Perlee, ZA, and Adam Lougee, Executive Director ACRPC

No Neatv coverage for this meeting.

Call to order: 7:05pm.

Update on Energy Grant

Katie shared that Bristol was awarded one of the energy grants. The money stays at the regional level and will be used to help the three towns that were awarded grants to rework their energy plans. Bill S shared that the goal in developing an updated energy plan that conforms to regional requirements is ultimately to give towns more say and autonomy on possible energy use in their towns. Sue asked if updates to energy plan will require town approval. Bill S confirmed it will.

Addition to Agenda: Application 18-505

Kris had an update on Greg Newman's application for his store/gardening business at 7 Main Street from the October 2, 2018 PC meeting. He has withdrawn the application because the business location has changed and will now be at 11 Main Street. Krys asked if the PC could waive the site plan requirement for the new application since the only change in the plan is the sign. In addition, a new hearing would lead to a two month delay in Greg's project plan. Sue expressed concern about the need for public notice. Kris clarified that the change of use and sign permit for the new location would require public notice so the need would be et. PC members agree that Krys could waive the site plan review.

Discussion with Adam Lougee from ACRPC

Adam from ACRPC arrived at 7:19pm and discussion re: possible assistance for the PC from Adam/ACRPC to update town plan began. Per Adam this update will need to consider the following sections specifically: economic development, child care, river corridors, flood resilience. We will also need to consider adding new sections per Katie. Katie shared that we are still waiting to hear about our planning grant application; involvement of ACRPC and the plan for our work depends on this. Adam shared that five applications totaling \$95,000 have been received; only \$40,000 is available total. As a designated downtown, Bristol will receive extra points in as an applicant over the consortium application of Vergennes and New Haven.

Adam shared that he will also be working with Bristol on our awarded energy grant. Adam recommended that we include our energy plan in our town plan so that this section will benefit from ACRPC assistance. We can also leave the energy plan as a separate document if we prefer. If Bristol wants an advanced energy plan in place, we will need to write our plan to conform to state requirements (and state goal to be at 90% renewables by 2050). If approved, this advanced energy plan would give Bristol “substantial deference” when presented with projects proposed by public energy utilities projects in our town. Essentially, if we have already completed mapping and pre-designated areas for solar and wind development in our town, we have more say if we don’t want a future proposed project in a particular area.

Adam said the energy plan work can start in November. We have \$4,400 to use. Rob asked how many hours of work with Adam (or Andrew L’Roe, from ACRPC staff) this translates to. Adam said 60-70 hours. Adam suggested that we create a smaller committee to complete the work - in his experience (he has completed this work with six towns previously) this is more efficient and productive than working with the whole PC group. Bill S proposed a sub-committee that includes two PC members and two Energy Committee members. Katie agreed. Mark volunteered to serve on the sub-committee. Katie suggested Sue Kavanagh as another possible PC representative. Rob offered to serve if Sue declines. Katie will touch base with Ian Albinson (chair of Energy Committee) about Energy Committee representatives, and will email Adam a list of names. PC will finalize plans for sub-committee work at next meeting.

Katie mentioned a possible solar installation project on Rt. 116, a gravel pit repurposing and reclaiming the land as a solar farm. The applicant wants to present to PC at our November 20 meeting to request that we designate the land as a “preferred area.” This designation would give the applicant a financial benefit (\$0.03/KW hour more). Kris asked what the criteria we would use to make the designation. Adam pointed out that this is why we need a planning process in place - our new energy plan will pre-designate any preferred areas. If our energy plan can’t be in place in time for the applicant’s project, the alternative is for the PC to send a letter (with approval from SB and ACRPC) to support the applicant’s project as a being in a preferred area. Or we can chose to wait and not make any designation prior to adoption of the new energy plan. Katie suggested that we invite the applicant to present at the November 20 meeting. Anna moved that we invite [need name of applicant - Ralph _____] to present the project at the November 20 meeting, with the understanding that there is no guarantee of designation. Bill S seconded. All in favor, 7-0.

Katie moved discussion to possible addition of subdivision regulations in Bristol. Discussion followed re: possible benefits of adding subdivision regulations (for town/applicants/future development). Adam also mentioned a possible new neighborhoods designation from the state that we might pursue. It would allow 40 unites/acre density if within 0.5 miles of a designated downtown area. This could potentially allow Bristol to expand its village core. Might be difficult since we don’t have municipal wastewater. Currently any commercial project over 1 acre or residential project that has 6 units or more triggers Act 250 review which is both time consuming and costly for applicant. If we had subdivision regulations, that would change to 10 acres/10 units. We have already missed out on some commercial development because of Act 250 - for example the

proposed new location for Bee's Wrap on Orchard Terrace (applicant didn't follow through with project because of Act 250 costs). Katie brought up the reality that if we implement subdivision regulations, we would probably need a design/development review board. Or will PC handle all the site plan reviews? Could we manage that additional workload, given current responsibilities? One of our goals per town plan (and revised zoning regulations) is to increase economic development in Bristol: could subdivision regulations help us accomplish this? If we decide to go ahead, we also need to decide if we update the town plan first and then add subdivision regulations or do we do all the work at once? Katie asked if we know enough to do make a decision/complete the work. Adam agreed to email us subdivision regulations from other towns for review.

Adam brought up Bristol's representation on ACRPC - currently Bill S and Peter Grant represent Bristol. We can have 3 representatives and 3 alternates. So if we want we can ask SH to appoint an additional member/up to 3 alternates.

Adam provided additional ACRPC updates for Bristol. Stormwater master plan for downtown and All Hazards plan are in progress. Class 1 portion of highway/Main Street is scheduled for repaving by state in 2020. If PC has proposals for additional needs/considerations (that don't add to overall cost in major way) as part of that work, we can submit them for consideration. Katie asked about stormwater needs relative to the paving in particular and wondered about timing. Adam said he would find out.

PC thanked Adam for his time and for the updates. Adam left at 8:35pm.

Bill B asked Katie about our initial town plan update work, when PC members each reviewed assigned sections of town plan for possible updates, and does she want us to prepare write-ups, gather updates stats. etc.. Katie said to hold for now. Our planning grant application took precedence over this approach to the update. Once we know if we will have funds available for ACRPC consultant (Adam or Andrew) to work with us on revising the plan, updating data/statistics, etc. we can revisit initial work as needed.

Motion to adjourn by Anna, seconded by Mark. All in favor, 7-0. Meeting ended at 8:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Anna Daylor
Vice Chair, Bristol Planning Commission