

## **Mendon Planning Commission Minutes (Draft) December 2, 2019**

**Present:** Justin Lindholm, Fred Bagley, Gary Sihler and Teri Corsones were present. The draft November 13, 2019 minutes were approved as written.

**Mendon Town Plan:** Teri reported that given Jeff Wennburg's schedule, it will not be possible to finalize the location of a "preferred site" for the Enhanced Energy Plan in the near future. Members agreed with Fred's suggestion that the original Energy Section be re-inserted into the Mendon Town Plan so that the Plan can be noticed for the Planning Commission public hearing as soon as possible. Teri indicated that per RRPC guidance, when an Enhanced Energy Plan is finalized in the future, it can be treated as an amendment to the approved Town Plan subject to the same approval process as the Town Plan.

Members reviewed the draft Town Plan dated December 2, 2019 that includes the changes Teri provided to the Select Board at its October 28 meeting, the minor changes referenced in the November 4 minutes, and the pagination and photo caption corrections that Amanda O'Conner recently incorporated into the draft. Members suggested the following additional minor changes:

1. Add Gary Sihler's name to the list of Planning Commission members who have worked on the Mendon Town Plan.
2. Ask Amanda to clarify whether the correct reference on page 14 is 0-9 years, or 0-14 years and finalize the figure accordingly.
3. Replace "Watershed" with "Forest" in two places on page 21.
4. Replace "the Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan" with "a future Enhanced Energy Plan" on pages 21 and 32.
5. Ask the RRPC to clean up the duplicate text for the brook references in the map on page 40.

Teri will then forward the draft to Sara so that she can notice the Planning Commission public hearing for Monday, January 6, 2020. Members will continue working on the Enhanced Energy Plan until it can be finalized as a separate document, and ultimately amended to the approved Town Plan.

**AT&T Wireless Communication Facility:** Teri reported that during the December 2 meeting she found a packet of information in the MPC mail box from Downs Rachlin Martin, consisting of a notice that AT&T intends to submit to the Vermont Public Utility Commission a petition for approval to construct a Wireless Communications Facility in Mendon. The notice is dated November 8; it was unclear on what date the packet was placed in the mailbox. It appears that the same notice was provided to the Mendon Select Board and to the Rutland Regional Planning Commission, although neither body had informed the Planning Commission of having received the notice.

Members reviewed the 10-page notice, and multiple pages of Exhibits A – E. They noted with alarm that the notice indicates that the following components are being proposed in a Residential 1 zoning district, as well as within the protected Ridgeline Overlay District where such components are not permitted uses:

1. A 140' tall telecommunications tower (the Tower).
2. Six panel antennas (4 per sector) at a centerline height of 136'.
3. A 8' 6" x 8' 6" concrete pad for housing antenna operating equipment.
4. A 20-kilowatt diesel emergency back-up generator.
5. A 50' x 50' gravel compound with an 8' tall chain link fence with barbed wire accessed by a 12' wide swing gate.
6. A 12' x 1,250' wide gravel access road off of U. S. Route 4.
7. Power and telephone lines running the length of the access road.
8. An ice bridge, a GPS antenna, a transformer and other equipment.

The notice also indicates that the Facility “is being designed to allow for co-location by additional wireless carriers in the future.”

The notice also indicates that “the Facility described in this notice is intended to improve A T & T’s network coverage and capacity in Ferrisburgh and Addison County”. The notice also indicates that the project “expands wireless broadband service into unserved areas of the town without significant adverse environmental, health or aesthetic impacts.”

Members question what areas of the town are currently unserved, and question how a project of such size, height and location could be considered to not have significant adverse scenic, environmental and aesthetic impacts.

Members request that the Town immediately consult legal counsel to review the notice and consider: (1) requesting A T & T to attend a public meeting within the 60-day notice period to answer residents' questions about the notice; (2) requesting an official from the Vermont Department of Public Service to attend a public hearing during the 60-day notice period so that the official can consider comments made during the meeting in making its recommendation to the PUC, including whether to retain additional personnel to provide information essential to full consideration of the petition; and (3) immediately notifying Mendon residents of the notice, as well as all neighboring communities that will be impacted by a 140' tower marring the current scenic landscape. Teri was asked to relay members' concerns to the Town Administrator and Select Board as soon as possible.

The next regular meeting of the Mendon Planning Commission is scheduled for Monday, January 6, 2020 at 5:15 p.m. at the Mendon Town Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Teri Corsones