



# MINUTES

**Thursday – January 18, 2024**

**5:30 – 7:30 PM**

**Cole Hall – Shaftsbury, VT**

**Present:** Nick Zaiac, David McAneny, Jock Irons, Dixie Zens, Cinda Morse, Michael Fernandez, Martha Cornwell, Dana Rozycki, Sheila Kearns, Rich Zoppel, Liz Ruffa, Gordon Black, John Lavecchia, Donald Campbell, Cat Bryars

**BCRC Staff:** Bill Colvin, Janet Hurley, Callie Fishburn, Jonathan Cooper, Scott Grimm-Lyon, Jim Henderson

**Public Attendees:** Zak Hale, Lilli Williams, Linda Schmidt, Allison Cavanaugh, Ali Elwell Zaiac and Zeke Zaiac

Meeting was called to order at 6 PM

## **1. Minutes of the November 16, 2023, BCRC Meeting**

Motion to approve the minutes by Dixie Zens, seconded by Donald Campbell. Passed unanimously.

## **2. Public Hearing – Woodford Town Plan**

Commission chair, Nick Zaiac, opened the hearing on the Woodford Town Plan. Major updates to the plan include updated language on forest block connectivity to comply with Act 171, new historic resources policies, and an implementation table.

Motion to approve the planning process for Woodford by Jock Irons, seconded by Dixie Zens. Passed unanimously.

Motion to close the hearing by Jock Irons, seconded by Donald Campbell.

Ballot results: Commissioners representing twelve (12) unique municipalities voted in the affirmative. None opposed.

### **3. Public Hearing – Sunderland Town Plan**

Motion to open the hearing by Nick Zaiac, seconded by Dixie Zens. The Sunderland Town Plan was amended to include language about applying for a Village Center Designation. This amendment will not re-start the 8-year cycle for updating a town plan.

Motion to approve the planning process for Sunderland and the enhanced energy plan by Dixie Zens, seconded by Jock Irons. Passed unanimously.

Motion to close the hearing by Dixie Zens, seconded by Jock Irons.

Ballot results: Commissioners representing twelve (12) unique municipalities voted in the affirmative. None opposed.

### **4. Update on Shaftsbury Economic Development Efforts**

Martha Cornwell gave an overview of economic development activities in Shaftsbury. The Economic Development Committee was reinstated in response to the municipal ARPA funding that the town received. The committee did several public surveys and the top recommendations included wanting community gathering and connection spaces. The outreach process was inclusive; there were multiple surveys, listening sessions, one-on-one contact with people at places around town, and engagement with the elementary school.

The town recently purchased a 2.2-acre property across from Cole Hall to start the process of developing a Town Green and community center. The community center will host large gatherings, and possibly pop-up medical clinics. The veteran's memorial will also be moved to the site of new community center once constructed.

Shaftsbury received an MPG and will be working with BCRC on an economic development strategy and commercial site inventory. The Town is also pursuing a grant for a wastewater feasibility study.

The Town has leveraged their municipal ARPA money to help kickstart the revitalization process but is also hoping to utilize funding from the Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP), a Better Places grant, and private donations.

Lilli Williams discussed the process of reopening the Shaftsbury Country Store and its impact on the revitalization of the town.

## **5. Update from Bennington Housing Committee**

Zak Hale gave an overview of the Bennington Housing Committee which has representation from Hale Resources, Shires Housing, Bennington County Coalition for the Homeless, law enforcement, the Town of Bennington, BCRC, and other stakeholders. One of the tasks the committee is working on is an inventory of potential housing sites in the region.

Members of the housing task forces in Manchester and Dorset also shared efforts to improve housing in their communities.

## **6. Other Business and Adjourn**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:20PM