

Town of Sharon, Vermont  
**Planning Commission**  
Minutes  
MARCH 16, 2021 (DRAFT)

The meeting was publicly warned in conformance with H.681 authorizing temporary amendments to Vermont's open meeting law to protect the health and safety of the public, board members, and town employees during the state of emergency declared due to COVID-19. Links were provided for public participation by videoconference software or by conventional phone.

Attending via Zoom: Planning Commissioners Ira Clark, Sue Sellew, Paul Kristensen, John Roe; Staff: Margy Becker (taking minutes), Tory Littlefield, TRORC; Dee Gish and Ryan Haac, Sharon Energy Committee.

Planning Commissioners Absent: Lee Simek,

**Ira Clark convened the meeting at 7:00PM.**

Nomination of Meeting Chair:

**Sue Sellew nominated Ira Clark as meeting chair. John Roe seconded and carried unanimously.**

Town Plan Revisions: Energy Chapter cont.'

A detailed review of portions of the Town Plan Energy Chapter was conducted, with Tory Littlefield facilitating and Sharon Energy Committee members Dee Gish and Ryan Haac participating in discussions.

Discussions covered

- Background data on local energy usage
- State goals for reducing reliance on petroleum-based fuels
- Current energy consumption levels in Sharon
- A review of local options for reducing energy consumption
- A review of renewable energy sources already being used locally
- A review of renewable energy sources currently considered most viable for future consideration throughout the Town (i.e. solar, small-scale or 'micro-scale' hydro
- A review of targets and goals for reduced consumption, increased efficiency, fuel switching, energy conservation and storage (batteries), etc.
- A review and discussions of goals, policies and recommendations

During discussions, Commissioners noted that Sharon is on the higher-end of towns in the region for energy consumption. They identified the Energy Chapter needs to better address questions such as “who” or “what entity” should direct energy efficiency and conservation initiatives across the community? in town-owned facilities? the Selectboard? Energy Committee? How can the Town encourage the local private sector initiatives that are needed to help the community achieve desired goals for energy conservation, efficiency, and development of renewable energy facilities? The need for ‘green’ procurement policies at the Town level was discussed. Ira Clark and Ryan Haac spoke of their hope for a ‘building code ordinance’ – similar to one being employed by the Town of Hartland.

The next meeting will be focused on a discussion of **proposed town-wide siting standards** for renewable energy facilities. Tory will lead a review of **maps** of preferred locations for each type of renewable energy facility and chapter text, inclusive of **siting standards**. **The Planning Commission meeting will occur April 20<sup>th</sup>.**

Tory Littlefield explained town siting standards have to be “similar across the board”. A plan *could* say “no renewable energy facilities shall be sited above 2,500 feet”. Planning commissioners have received samples of town-wide siting standards in use by, or being considered by, neighboring towns. Commissioners face the challenge of identifying the appropriate ‘scale’ of renewable energy facilities to be encouraged in the future. Sue Sellew commented about the need for a wind energy siting plan.

Approval of Minutes:

**Sue Sellew made the motion to accept the edited minutes of March 9, 2021 with edits to the Parker and Kebalka subdivision reviews as discussed. Paul Kristensen seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

Adjourn:

**Sue Sellew made the motion to adjourn at 9:30PM. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.**

Submitted by,  
Margy Becker