

Town of Sharon, Vermont
Planning Commission
Minutes
April 20, 2021 (Final)

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, Lee Simek, John Roe
Staff: none
TRORC representative: Victoria Littlefield
Sharon Energy Committee: Ryan Haac, Dee Gish

SPC Members absent: none

Ira Clark convened the meeting at 7:00PM.

Nomination of Meeting Chair:

Ira Clark was named temporary meeting chair

Town Plan review, Energy Chapter:

Tory presented RPC maps illustrating topographically ideal sites for solar generation in Sharon, potential hydroelectric sites, and areas rated for wind turbine viability. Commissioners were also shown a GMP map indicating remaining capacity on power lines throughout the region. TRORC is not advocating biomass as a renewable energy solution owing to its atmospheric carbon production.

Planning Commissioners resumed discussion of the Energy Chapter, focusing on preferred siting for renewables and those areas discouraged from development. The group's consensus was that the document should guide development based on solid environmental, aesthetic, and grid-related criteria and not rely on designation of actual physical sites for new generation. Identification of specific sites in advance of real project proposals would inevitably be controversial with landowners and other interested residents, and existing commercial-scale solar generation appears to be ignoring mapped areas of high solar potential anyhow. Furthermore, many of the map-recommended sites are difficult to access from any road. Commissioners favor carefully crafting the guidelines on siting of projects and then evaluating each proposal on a case-by-case basis.

Commissioners discussed the viability of a 500kW size limit on commercial PV projects, methods to encourage dispersed development, proximity to roadways, and the drawbacks of remote location of solar projects. Standard verbiage on protected areas was reviewed. Limits on ridgeline development were discussed. Sue will look at Sharon's Telecommunications Bylaw to see what language it has with regard to high elevation facilities.

The Energy Chapter MS Word document is not allowing tracked changes. Ryan volunteered to reformat the document to permit collaborative editing. Tory will forward the file to Ryan and circulate it among members before the next SPC meeting.

Upcoming work on the Town Plan was discussed, covering the spring and summer months.

Dee Gish inquired as to the status of the junkyard ordinance that had been in discussion many months ago. Planning Commissioners believe the Sharon Select Board had been evaluating possible language. Commissioners are unclear where that work now stands, but can ask the Select Board.

Administrative Business:

1. Draft minutes for the **February 9th** SPC meeting were reviewed. John motioned to approve. Sue seconded. All were in favor.
2. Draft minutes for the **March 9th** SPC meeting were reviewed. Sue motioned to approve, with edits. Lee seconded. All were in favor.
3. Draft minutes for the **March 16th** SPC meeting were reviewed. John motioned to approve, with edits. Sue seconded. All were in favor.
4. Draft minutes for the **April 13th** SPC meeting were reviewed. Sue motioned to approve, with edits. Lee seconded. All were in favor.
5. Commissioners agreed that May should also have two SPC meetings. The 5/11/21 session will be dedicated to a subdivision hearing and subdivision applications. The 5/18/21 meeting will be for Town Plan work. Each meeting will start at 7 PM.

Adjournment:

Sue Sellew made the motion to adjourn at 9:16 PM. Lee Simek seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Submitted by
Ira Clark