

Town of Lyndon
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 11, 2024

In attendance—

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Holly Taylor, Ken Mason, Dan Guest, John Peters, Robert Little (Zoom)

OFFICIALS: Tracy Bodeo (Planning Director)

PUBLIC: Evan Dell'Olio (Vermont Renewable Gas, LLC)

PRESS: Paul Hayes (Zoom)

Meeting begins: Chair, Holly Taylor opens meeting at 6:02 pm

Agenda Changes: There were no changes to the agenda.

Approval of the minutes from the August 14, 2024, meeting: Holly Taylor made the motion to approve. Ken Mason seconded the approval. Vote, all approved.

Comments from public on non-agenda items: None

Current business discussed—

- Tracy stated that there was a Rotary club meeting meet and greet on 9/11/24 where she introduced herself and what she has been working on starting out as Planning Director, and where members were able to share their thoughts.
- Tracy then stated that she again met with the Village Improvement Society (VIS) and Jesse Noone of NVDA to discuss what will be presented to the Selectboard, on October 21st (tentative) regarding plans for Power's Park.
- Continuing to try and get Kingdom Trails into and through Lyndon was discussed next. Tracy met with the Trails Director of Kingdom Trails and is hoping to find funding that will expand the trails. This should be a good opportunity for bringing people into town.
- Tracy discussed the details on applying for a Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) grant with the help of NVDA, that will allow for energy saving renovations to all five of the municipal buildings (Office building, Ice Rink, Town Garage, Public Safety Building, and Cobleigh Library). As noted by other PC members, there are certain stipulations of what can be done to each of the buildings, but we will work with engineers to decide what is best. Tracy will complete the application in the next two weeks, and we should know sometime in October if Lyndon will be receiving the grant. There would be no Town match for this grant, and it was noted that Lyndon has a good chance of receiving the grant based on its designation as a high energy burden municipality.

- Tracy shared that there was a grant awarded for the repair of the sidewalks on Maple Street, which should happen in the coming year.
- Next the PC discussed how last summer S100 bill Act 48 was passed. This mostly has to do with housing densities and now only allowing one parking space per new unit put in. Tracy will work with Jon Prue on understanding how the new act will affect Lyndon and will bring the information to the PC at a future meeting.

New business was then discussed—

- Tracy mentioned starting to review the town plan but will wait until later in the meeting.
- Tracy brought up reviewing the petition by Vermont Renewable Gas LLC (“VRG”), to the State of Vermont Public Utility Commission (PUC) for a Certificate of Public Good (“CPG”) authorizing VRG to install and operate a farm methane 2.2 MW electric generation facility. Evan Dell’Olio, one of the project owners of VRG, was in attendance and was asked if he would like to discuss some of the information about the project and where it was at.
- In summary, Evan made the following comments: The petition was filed with the PUC using the 248j process. A Section 248 petition is specific for a CPG for businesses that generate electricity and are separate from Act 250. Evan stated that his company addressed specific items that were brought up in February from sections of the Lyndon municipal plan including that the project went through a review with VTrans. Evans mentioned that the VTrans engineer looked at the project from a traffic standpoint and said that they did not have concerns. Also looked at the location in the industrial park and determined that based on its size, this was an appropriate place. VRG filed this as a 248j petition because with the advice of counsel, based on scope of project, they were told that they could go through the expedited approach (j). However, it is still going through a public comment period, and if the comments come back in a certain light, a public meeting in Lyndon could still take place and then if there are substantive questions and issues, hearings could occur, and the expedited process could be moved back to a regular 248 approach. But he also said that VRG has already received a permit from the air quality division of the DEC, earlier this summer, to construct and operate. Also just received a construction stormwater permit. Says that they have taken a concerted effort to meet the requirements of VT environmental laws.
- Evan then answered a few questions from the PC. Ken Mason asked when they would be online. They believe that the planned opening of the facility is not due to occur now until 4th quarter of 2025. Ken also brought up that there is a message going out from various community groups that the expedited process is being pushed through because they do not want to go through the regular process and are hoping to not have any public meetings. Evan stated that he welcomes community input. Robert Little also brought up the expedited nature of the project and the specific technology that is being used and asked Evan to explain both. Evan said it was expedited due to it being of limited scope, in an industrial park, and because they have already received permits and so it was recommended to them to do this. Also stated that the technology was “heavily vetted during a process that allowed for public comment over several months and the DEC deemed that it was an acceptable and appropriate technology to be sited in the State of Vermont. Evan believes this is safe and stated that the 248j requires additional material provided ahead of time and is a very detailed petition. Also mentioned the biochar aspect and other technology that has been proven. He feels that they have provided all

the details to adequately address the requirements. Ken mentioned that there may be another electric-connected facility that is looking to site in the vicinity. Evan was unaware of another electric facility. There was one, Light Shift, that may be looking. Evan said there was already an impact study done to address another facility being on the line.

- Other business briefly discussed was applying for the next Municipal Planning Grant (MPG) that will open this fall with new criteria. We will have to decide what type of project we might want to try to apply for funding of. We may want to continue another project or start something new. We need to wait until we see the criteria to see what we might have the best chance of applying for.
- Ken asked about getting caught up on all past grants and what happened to the plan for the park at the Old Town Garage site. We discussed how the original plan was put on hold until after the area is investigated further with the possibility of changing the park into a flood plain restoration area with access to the river. The land would have to be remediated first, and a land trust could do this if they took over the property. We will discuss this further.
- The next PC meeting will also include a presentation by Richard Amour and Jacob Hemmerick, of VT DHCD, that will review the benefits of being designated Village Center and the possibility of adding on a Neighborhood Designated area.
- PC also brought up that the downtown businesses are concerned about empty buildings and the look of downtown. Holly suggested that we need to make the downtown look more attractive, with light posts and plants where they can be seen, etc. Weed-whacking the plants growing out of the sidewalk needs to be done. People drive too fast, no outdoor seating, no people hanging out enjoying themselves. We also need to address where people could park and walk the main street and increase foot traffic. John Peters mentioned looking into what Littleton has. Are there other possibilities of parking lots like near the Asian restaurant? Who owns it?
- It was then suggested that since the Town Plan has so many actions in it, Tracy should go through the plan to specifically pick out what actions need to be taken by the PC. Tracy will put together a list and the PC will discuss at a near future meeting.
- There was a question from Paul Hayes about debris pickup. Ken stated that this has to be scheduled. Ken would be in contact with Paul to give him more information so he can join a pickup.
- Holly mentioned that she wanted to publicly acknowledge how Ken Mason and Kermit Fisher are appreciated for their hard work with clean-up and how nice they are as they work with the people in the community that they are helping. Dave Keenen was also mentioned as a volunteer for this work.

Adjourn: Holly suggested that the meeting adjourn. Motion to adjourn was made by Ken Mason at 6:55 pm. Seconded Jon Peters. All approved.