

Lunenburg Planning Committee

Meeting Minutes: July 24, 2025

Attendees:

Tina Breault, Gary Briggs, Liz Benoit, Nate Brown

Community Members: 3

1) No items were added to the agenda:

2) Planning Committee Appointments

- The following appointments were made and approved by all:
 - Chair – Gary Briggs
 - Secretary – Tina Breault

3) Gilman – Proposed Solar Project

- Ampersand has let the Planning Committee and Selectboard know that they will be filing a 45-day notice on July 25 for a 4MW solar project and 5MW battery electric storage system on the mill property.
- Discussion about what this project, as well as the recent news about VRS bringing the 1.8 mile rail in Gilman back online, will have to the village of Gilman.
- Questions about whether or not there will be any type of benefit to the town, either financially or energy wise through the energy that is generated? We don't know the answer to that, but we do know the town doesn't get any benefit from the current solar array on their property other than the property tax.
- Planning Committee and Selectboard will arrange to have a public meeting with Ampersand to answer community questions once the filing has been made.

4) Housing

- On April 17, the Town-Owned Property Committee met with the Selectboard and proposed expanding the focus of their work to championing affordable housing within the community.
- The Selectboard tasked the Town-Owned Property Committee to reach out to the planning committee to discuss them becoming a subcommittee. As of this meeting, the two groups have not met.
- Discussion ensued around what the Town-Owned Property Committee's function is supposed to be and how often they meet. And concerns were raised about the proposals that were made to the Selectboard during the April 17 meeting.
- Tina will follow-up with Linda Magoni (Town-Owned Property Committee) to try and arrange the two groups to meet.
- Meanwhile, the planning committee has:
 - Reached out to Patrick Shattuck (RuralEdge) to get updated figures on how many seniors are on the Gilman Senior Housing waitlist
 - Reached out to Nate Formularie, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), to find out if we can get DHCD to visit our community.
 - Monitoring updates on the Community and Housing Infrastructure Program (CHIP) Program. CHIP enables municipalities to finance essential infrastructure (like water, sewer, roads, and stormwater systems) that supports new housing development.

5) Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

- The CIP is a non-binding planning tool that helps the town plan for future needs and develop funding plans to address them. This is done for both town assets (like fire and road vehicles and equipment) and for town projects (such as new buildings, building renovations, sidewalk projects, drainage projects, parks and recreational areas, studies, etc.).
- Six-year plan, the current year plus five years out.
- Finalizing the spreadsheets for each department. Then the information will be forwarded to consultant RCAP (funded through a grant program) to roll-up into the plan.

6) Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP)

- Draft of plan was sent to Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) on April 17. Pending approval by the state and then will present to Selectboard for adoption.
- Question: How often does the plan need to be updated?
 - UPDATE: Verified that it needs to be updated every five years.
- Question: If updates are made from year to year, do those require approval from VEM?
 - UPDATE: The following response was received by VEM:
“Given the amount of work required to update a plan, most towns do not update within those five years. You should monitor your plan actions annually and update things on your end to ensure the plan meets your needs, but I wouldn’t amend the plan document and submit it for a new approval until you do a plan update in five years.”
- Question: Does having a LHMP provide the town with funding for training, etc?
 - UPDATE: Having a LHMP would help with grants for training, but there is no specific funding available for training once you have an LHMP.
- Question: Where are we in the approval process?
 - UPDATE: The plan is currently in state review and should be sent back with revisions within a couple of weeks.

7) Crosswalks/Sidewalks

- Application for the 2025 VTrans Bike/Ped Scoping Study Grant was submitted on July 11.
- Applicants will receive notification in late August

8) Next Meeting

- Move to quarterly cadence, next meeting in October – date to be determined.
- Plan tracker will be updated and posted to the website prior to the next meeting.

9) Community Comments

- Chris Lingley had a question on Housing – Back when we were doing the municipal plan, we had talked about looking for incentives or assistance with money to help people who wanted to stay in their house, like in the mother-in-law size part of the house, and then the other house could be open to somebody that needed 2 or 3 bedrooms, or whatever. Has that ever been looked at?
 - We held the RuralEdge workshop in January where they gave an overview of 5 different programs. Unfortunately, a lot of people may not have gotten information about the program. RuralEdge really encourages people to call them and talk to them about the different programs. They can walk the individuals through the options and the application which can be complicated.
 - Every door direct mailing costs about \$170; maybe the town can do a mailing about the different programs.
 - Gary will follow-up with the Council on Aging to see if they have suggestions on how to get information to people.

10) Meeting Adjourned at 7:17pm