

**Town of Boscawen  
PLANNING BOARD  
Boscawen Municipal Complex  
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES  
Tuesday, November 10, 2020 at 6:30 PM**

**Present:** Mark Varney – Chair; Frederick Reagan – Vice-Chair; Barbara Randall, Gary Tillman, Roberta Witham, Lorrie Carey –Ex-Officio;

**Excused:** Rhoda Hardy, Loren Martin– Alternate, Paul Dickey - Alternate Ex-Officio,

**Staff Present:** Kellee Jo Easler - Planning & Community Development Director; Kearsten O’Brien– Planning and Community Development Assistant, Crystal Tuttle–Recording Secretary;

**Others Present:** Michael Tardiff, Executive Director– CNHRPC, Stephanie Alexander, Senior Planner– CNHRPC, Craig Tufts, Principal GIS/Transportation Planner–CNHRPC

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Chair Mark Varney opened the public meeting at 6:30pm.

Chair Varney read off the Covid-19 Public Meeting Notice of Telephonic Meetings, which reads as follows: In light of the state of emergency declared by the Governor on March 13, 2020, and to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, the chair has determined that an emergency exists and that accordingly, until further notice, (a) members of the board may attend all board meetings telephonically, without the physical presence of a quorum; and (b) members of the public who wish to participate in hearings may, on request, participate telephonically or submit comments in writing to be included in the record of the hearing.

Roll call completed by Kearsten O’Brien.

**Minutes**

October 6, 2020–Lorrie Carey motioned to accept the minutes as amended. Seconded by Gary Tillman. All in favor. None opposed.

**Old Business:**

Planning and Community Development Director Kellee Easler invited Mike Tardiff, Executive Director with Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission to discuss the Economic Development Chapter of the Master Plan. Director Tardiff stated that he sent out a draft of the chapter at the previous Planning Board meeting for review. The Economic Development Chapter reviews economic characteristics of the Town such as tax rates, employment and an overview of the economic base of the Town. The economic characteristics of the Town show that there was not a big increase in employment over the last nine years. The unemployment rate decreased in 2019, yet this does not reflect the shorter term numbers due to the pandemic. Figure 6:2 uses the census data to show where the employment in Town is located. Table 6:1 refers to those who have Workers Compensation. When you compare the average weekly wage, Boscawen is right at

the top compared to neighboring towns. Page 4 references commuting patterns of where employees go within the town. Not a lot of Boscawen residents work in Boscawen. Many are going South East, or people are commuting into Boscawen. Table 6:2 shows the full value tax rate which is used to equalize valuations and evenly compare Boscawen to neighboring towns. Concord and Boscawen are the two highest rates in this comparison. Development trends in figure 6:4 show that 2016 was a big year for residential building permits. Page 6 outlines the available tools that were previously discussed at the October 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. This includes the community revitalization tax relief incentive, figure 6:5. If this were approved at town meeting, it would allow residents making an investment to get a break on their valuation for up to five years to lower their taxes on a change that made an improvement with the public covenant. This includes something that improves the outside of a house or building, and is a process where the resident can apply to the Select Board to keep their valuation the same for up to five years. This is a tool to help someone decide to make an investment along the King Street corridor. We also discussed the Economic Revitalization Zone (ERZ) which is a tool to help a business owner get a break in their business or enterprise tax if they make an improvement in infrastructure or adding full time equivalent employees. Page 8 outlines a couple of these potential zones, including the MRD as well as north of Valley of Industry. This will help with an application for the ERZ, as it is simply an application signed by the Select Board and sent to the state and does not need to go to town meeting. This does not impact your net valuation and property tax base, it is simply a break on the business profits tax. Director Tardiff outlined Commercial and Industrial Construction exemption– NH RSA 72:80-83 for those who are learning more about these tools. It is similar to the tax break for King Street, as this would allow a potential decrease in the net valuation for new construction for commercial and industrial for a period of up to ten years. This is a tool the town can use to help someone make a decision to make an investment in Boscawen. It is more difficult to decide where you would want that to apply, whether it was all commercial properties or a specific property. Director Tardiff discussed having the town use it for the MRD and the Industrial zones. The Tax Increment Financing (TIF) could potentially overlay the MRD that could potentially be used, for example, an extension of a water line or sidewalks, which is a tool that Concord has used. This chapter shows the tools that can be used over the course of the next few years and tried to lay it out easiest to hardest. Discussion ensued in regards to the Northern Rail Trail, Brownfields Assessment Program, potential clean up grants and future King Street improvements. The key for all of this is the formation of an Economic Development Committee and this chapter can provide strategic planning for that committee. Planning and Community Development Director Easler states that the town had put together an Economic Development Committee in 2013 where business owners, staff and community members participated Director Easler and Ms. Carey discussed the history of past committees and the challenges they had without a budget. Director Tardiff said that the ERZ can be done without a budget, but a small budget would help. Chair Varney states that he believes some money was put into the CIP for community development, Director Easler states that she has \$5,000 set aside in the Planning and Community Development budget, not the CIP. This budget will be gone at the end of December if it is not used. Director Easler says she is unsure if something can be started on such short notice. Chair Varney stated that the formation of a committee should be first and Ms. Carey recommends an initial assessment on what the Town has in order to determine what is needed. She would be interested to find out why the town lost some business this year. Ms. Carey suspects that in order to recruit business to Boscawen, they would need access to public water and sewer. Yet without survey work done, the Town will not know the needs. Director

Tardiff says that CNHRPC can help lay out a scope for this. Chair Varney and Director Easler spoke about voting to accept the Economic Development Chapter, but to wait on a public hearing so that the NRI & the Energy Chapter can be discussed all together at one public hearing.

**Motion made by Chair Varney to accept the Economic Development Chapter into the Master Plan, Mr. Tillman seconds. All in favor. None opposed.**

Stephanie. Alexander, Senior Planner for CNHRPC reviewed the Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) and the changes that were made to the document from the last meeting. Director Easler provided the history of the wetland buffer, which was included in the chapter along with moving the site plan review into the Zoning Ordinance. Page 2 includes an explanation of what a wetland setback is and why it is necessary. The wetland setbacks are based off of best practices adopted by other communities. The distinction between wetland setback and buffer are outlined on Page 10. Mrs. Randall points out a typing error, and Planner. Alexander says it will be fixed on the final draft. Director Easler asks if this chapter is categorized as an appendix to the Master Plan, or if it will be a standalone document. Chair Varney states that it should be an appendix. Planner Alexander moved onto the Energy Chapter and states that there are more graphics included to break up the text. The chapter retains the vision of Boscawen pursuing opportunities for energy efficiency and the need to reduce municipal expenditures. The energy types are broken into two sectors: fossil fuels and renewable energy. Updated facts, figures and sources are found throughout the document with hyperlinks included. Planner Alexander will continue to monitor legislation regarding energy efficiency related to solar power. A succinct narrative about the town's relationship is outlined on pages 10 and 11 regarding utility delivery charges. Huckleberry bills were reviewed for oil and propane for the municipal facilities in Boscawen. Table 10-7 shows the approximate total cost over the year for oil, gas, propane and electricity. Included in the information was Jamie Welch Field and Dorval House as requested, to show what resources were being used and during what seasons. The objectives and recommendations of this document remain the same, the foremost recommendation being to establish a local energy committee. Other communities are establishing their own municipal solar arrays, Dunbarton being the best example. Dunbarton's energy chapter in their Master Plan and website are extremely detailed and Ms. Alexander recommends researching this. Chair Varney points out a typo on Page 19 under Dormant Facilities. Director Easler comments that the Torrent Building shows a large amount of money being spent on fuel, the number being over \$11,000. Chair Varney asks if this includes Penacook Rescue, and Director Easler states that she does not believe it does. Director Easler will speak to the Town Administrator for more information. Mr. Tillman asked if she has heard about the solar glass shortage and if this would have an impact on solar installations. Ms. Alexander states she has not heard of this, but agrees that it could be possible. She does feel that a decline in solar energy is unlikely at this time as it is the most popular renewable energy source in the country at the time. Chair Varney says he will move to accept this chapter after the municipal bills from the Torrent building are reviewed and updated. Boscawen currently uses the same wind energy ordinance that the State of New Hampshire has in place, so the Renewable Energy Systems Ordinance focuses on solar energy and wood fired hydronic heaters. Four pages of definitions are included, some of these definitions taken from the Small Wind Energy Systems Ordinance so as not to repeat information. Abandonment was fixed to include solar as well as small wind energy. Upon speaking to Ed Cherian, Planner Alexander

was made aware that solar energy technology is rapidly changing, so it was best to keep technological specifics to a minimum in the Ordinance starting on page 9. Included is a new set of definitions for solar energy that include Commercial or Agricultural Scale, Community Scale, Residential Accessory Scale, and Large Commercial, Industrial or Utility Scale. Wattages are not included, as this is part of the rapidly changing technology and would force the town to reevaluate the Ordinance too often. The Ordinance limits the surface size of the solar array and Ms. Alexander believes this is the first Ordinance to do so in the state. The Table of Uses on page 11 includes what areas would need a conditional use permit or a special exception permit, and Director Easler would like to submit a correction changing the “X” used in the table to “SE,” for Special Exception rather than a Variance as it is in the Zoning Ordinance. Page 13 Procedure for Review highlights the types of permits needed for the various scale of solar panels. Also provided are provisions for setbacks, using the existing setbacks from property lines and this section can be amended in the future if necessary. Page 16 and 17 discuss Waivers and Bonding and Security Insurance, which protects the Town from abandoned solar energy systems. Page 18 discusses Outdoor Wood-Fired Hydronic Heaters (OWHH). Discussed is the use of clean wood and clean pellet fuels, prohibited fuels, and nuisances that may occur because of the units. Planner Alexander recommends that 25 ft of the 50 ft required buffer be vegetative, Chair Varney and Vice-Chair Reagan ask that the word vegetative as a requirement be removed and replaced “units must include a maintained buffer of vegetative or manmade material.” The Board would like the requirement that OWHH may not be operated between May 15 and September 15 removed, as many residents use these units to heat their water year- round. Director Easler points out that the Ordinance refers to a Town Noise Ordinance, yet there is no existing ordinance and must be removed. A public hearing will be held in January for the Renewable Energy Systems Ordinance.

### **New Business:**

In regards to the update to the Zoning Ordinance, Director Easler states that the definition for motor vehicle junkyard must omit the words “registered” due to a change in 2008 within the statute and Article 6.02, b. regarding the separation of buildings because the NFPA 1 and NFPA 101 takes care of that..

**Mrs. Carey motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Tillman. All in favor. None opposed. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 P.M.**

**Next meeting will be December 1, 2020 at 6:30pm**

*Respectfully submitted by, Crystal Tuttle.*