

Draft Minutes - Craftsbury Planning Commission - May 13, 2021

Present at Town Hall: Rudy Chase (Planning Commission), Farley Brown (Planning Commission) , Jim Jones (Select Board) Penelope Doherty, Bruce Urie (Select Board) . Present via Zoom: Lucas Schulz (Planning Commission), Gina Campoli, Emily Maclure (Planning Commission), Annie Rowell (Planning Commission), Susan Houston (Select Board), Linda Ramsdell (Planning Commission), Gordon Waterhouse (Planning Commission)

Guest Speaker Ted Brady, Executive Director, VT League of Cities and Towns(VLCT) via Zoom.

Meeting called to order at 7:18PM due to Zoom technology challenges.

Annie motion to approve April 8 Planning Commission minutes, Rudy seconded, no discussion. Minutes of April 8 2021 approved unanimously.

Ted Brady gave the background on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. This pandemic recovery bill has local aid, unlike previous bills. Our Congressional delegation was very involved in this change, and in ensuring that local governments will be involved in determining how to deploy the funds. The Legislature gave VLCT responsibility to help towns figure this out as well as how to report on the Federal funds

More than a billion dollars will be coming to Vermont, and it is very flexible money.

Ted Brady is advising towns not to spend the money right away and to be patient. He counsels using ARPA funds and other state and federal funds to leverage each other and to invest in long term recovery. He advises using our regional planning commission as a resource to help manage projects. There is also the possibility of transferring money to another entity to outsource projects. Towns will have 3 years to spend the money and he emphasized there is no hurry. Administration of the money is an eligible expense. Other examples of eligible expenses include hazard pay, pandemic related expenses, economic and community development related to pandemic recovery, payments to residents, grants to businesses, wastewater and broadband. ARPA money cannot be used as match for Federal funds nor to lower taxes.

In response to a question about lining up ARPA funds with other funds from DEC of the Dept. of Education, Ted pointed out that it will take departments time to stand up programs.

He recommends that towns engage with citizens now about how we want to spend this money. Ted Brady recognizes that it will be work for the Select Board to determine how to spend the money and how to engage in a public process. VLCT is hiring an ARPA coordinator and has an ARPA resource page online. VLCT may hire someone to facilitate town conversations. Gina asked the Select Board if they are planning to engage with a public process, and discussion followed about what a public process to identify uses for the funds might look like in Craftsbury.

Farley let the group know that students in the Sterling College Land Use History and Planning class are documenting wells in Craftsbury Village and trying also to gather information on waste water and septic. They are putting together a report that might be useful as we work on village wastewater.

Farley drew our attention to the Open Meeting Guidance provided to the Planning Commission by the town.

Gina expressed that she is willing to help on a municipal planning Grant.

There was a short discussion about the update to Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Next Planning Commission meeting will be June 10th at 7PM

Meeting adjourned at 8:10PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Ramsdell, Secretary