

# Richmond Planning Commission

## Regular Meeting

Wednesday, December 18, 2013

### *Approved Minutes*

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**Members Present:** Mark Fausel (Chair), Bruce LaBounty (Vice-Chair), Ann Cousins, Marc Hughes, Brian Tellstone

**Members Absent:** Sean Foley, Lauck Parke

**Others Present:** Cathleen Gent (Town Planner/Staff to the DRB), Geoffrey Urbanik (Town Manager)

**7:07 PM** Fausel called the meeting to order.

**Public Comments** – There were no public comments.

#### **Administrative Items**

*Mail* – Gent reviewed the mail.

*Meeting Minutes - For December 4, 2013* – No edits were offered. Motion by Cousins, seconded by Tellstone, to approve the minutes as amended. Voting: 4 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstentions.

*Planning & Zoning Department Monthly Report for November* – No discussion.

*2013 Planning Commission report for Annual Report* - The Planning Commission offered some suggested changes: adding the ending of the terms for each member; adding the Planning Commission priority list; and revising the paragraph about the Route 2 Bicycle and Pedestrian Study to reflect the fact that the preferred alternative will have to be re-evaluated due to right-of-way issues.

#### **Old Business**

*Creamery parcel updates* – Cousins reported that a small group met with Joss Besse, who is helping revamp a public survey. She said the survey will be ready soon and that the Economic Development Committee is focusing on getting public input about the creamery. She added that Paul Hauf is the new chair. Gent asked if she should send out the draft bylaws that she has prepared based on the November 2012 proposed bylaws and the current bylaws. Cousins replied that it would be good to wait until they receive public input. She said that Joss Besse has suggested that gathering public input should be broad based about what is best for the future of Richmond, not simply based on what use will generate high water and sewer usage. Cousins said that the Senior Center Committee, which has applied for a brownfields grant, need to provide a site plan as part of the application. Cousins said she is bringing up, in the small committee discussions, the need for looking at the link between development and traffic.

*Cell tower updates – for VTel and AT&T Projects* - Urbanik discussed the Selectboard's meeting on Monday night, noting that Cousins and LaBounty were present and that Sean Foley was present until the group went into executive session. Cousins noted that she works for a nonprofit that works with attorney Gerry Tarrant, who was retained by the Selectboard on Monday to work with the town on cell tower issues. Urbanik added that Tarrant will help the Selectboard and Planning Commission, if they decide to also retain Tarrant, with applications that go through the Public Service Board. Urbanik and the Planning Commission discussed goals and strategies for preparing for the applications. Urbanik said that the Selectboard wants to continue submitting comments on the VTel application and that hopefully the PSB will allow for a local hearing on that application. He said that the Agency of Natural Resources and the town are submitting comments by Friday on the VTel application. He added that the PSB will look at the VTel and the AT&T applications separately. Urbanik said he thinks it would be very helpful for the town to hire an engineer to prepare a coverage analysis to assist in knowing where there might be gaps in service and overlapping service areas so as to be ready to address new applications. He said he is reaching out to a couple engineers regarding a coverage map.

The Planning Commission took up the question of whether members would like to retain attorney Tarrant to represent its interests. Marc Hughes arrived at 7:35 PM. Cousins said she thinks the end goal for the town is for there to be towers that provide the best service to the community which are aesthetically pleasing. Other commissioners agreed. LaBounty asked whether a coverage analysis would take into account future technology. Cousins and Urbanik said the current use of fiber and wireless are continuing to be used because the signal still needs some way to be picked up. Cousins also said she would like to see less scarring of hillsides due to the access roads. Cousins then asked

1 the other board members if she should recuse herself due to her employer’s professional relationship  
2 with Attorney Tarrant and the sentiment of the Planning Commission is that she does not need to  
3 recuse herself.

4  
5 Motion by Tellstone, seconded by LaBounty, to authorize the approval of the Gerald Tarrant  
6 engagement letter for the Planning Commission. There was general discussion that the Selectboard  
7 has already hired Tarrant and that having legal representation allows the Planning Commission to  
8 remain part of the town’s process within the current Public Service Board proceedings (for VTel and  
9 AT&T) and to keep abreast of developments as they take place. The Planning Commission recognized  
10 that it can make a different decision later as the situation evolves. Voting: 5 in favor; 0 opposed; 0  
11 abstentions.

12  
13 *Town Planner/Staff to the DRB position* – Urbanik said he will begin recruitment for the position soon,  
14 noting that the Selectboard did not offer any specific changes to the position on Monday night. He  
15 requested that a Planning Commission member serve on the search committee and Fausel volunteered  
16 to serve. The Planning Commission discussed the position. Urbanik said he is open to input and  
17 recommendations from the Planning Commission and asked members to contact him soon to offer any  
18 input, as he will advertise the position soon.

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20  
21 **FY15 Capital Plan**

22 The Planning Commission next discussed the capital plan with Urbanik. Gent and Urbanik provided an  
23 overview of the Planning Commission’s formal role vis-à-vis the capital Plan. Urbanik noted that the  
24 Planning Commission should look at the plan and budget in terms of whether a given item meets the  
25 town’s planning objectives. If something is left out or the order of items should be modified, the  
26 Planning Commission should recommend to the Selectboard that the plan be changed.

27  
28 The Planning Commission reviewed the document. The discussion first focused on the water and sewer  
29 plan elements and budget. Urbanik explained details about the new water tank which is in the plan. He  
30 said that reducing the size of the new tank would not reduce the cost and that that Water and Sewer  
31 Commissioners want the capacity that a larger tank provides. He said the new tank capacity is based  
32 on a 50-year build out for 165 new users or 110,000 gallons a day usage. Today’s usage is 90,000  
33 gallons a day. The 50-year build out assumes that the creamery parcel will be a mixed use, with no high  
34 volume user. Recent changes in the ISO (for fire-fighting) and state water supply rules require that the  
35 water supply system be upgraded because it does not currently meet the standards. Urbanik said that  
36 the current tower is 45 years old and has exceeded its life span and that, in its current location at the  
37 top of the hill, the amount of water pressure does not meet state standards or fire ratings standards.

38  
39 The Planning Commission discussed the Winooski River stabilization item, which Urbanik noted has  
40 been deferred to FY2016 by the Selectboard. Planning Commission members suggested that a grant  
41 might help cover the costs, especially because the stabilization would protect existing village properties.  
42 Urbanik said the town requested FEMA mitigation money and that FEMA declined the request. Gent  
43 said she will investigate potential funding sources.

44  
45 The Planning Commission asked if the capital plan includes a repair for the Gillette Pond dam. Urbanik  
46 said that is not currently in the plan. He noted that if the town were to participate in any repair activity, it  
47 would most likely come through a request for the conservation reserve fund. He added that the dam is  
48 not likely to become owned by the Town of Richmond and that there is a “Friends of Gillette Pond”  
49 group forming to take action. Urbanik said the cost of the repair could range from \$300,000 to \$500,000  
50 and that there will be annual inspections and insurance.

51  
52 The Planning Commission briefly discussed the town center maintenance items. Urbanik said the  
53 window repairs/replacements need to be done within five years. Urbanik said the town center parking  
54 lot will be repaved next summer. He said that the leases cover maintenance costs but that both leases  
55 are subject to a provision allowing the tenants to leave in two years. He said the town center committee  
56 will be reactivated. The Commission encouraged Cousins to continue serving on that committee.

57  
58 The Planning Commission also briefly discussed the highway budget and recreation budgets. Urbanik  
59 noted that two items, the annual asphalt paving and the annual gravel plan, were reduced by the

1 Selectboard. Gent said that the previous Planning Commission had looked at adding a capital budget  
 2 item for new recreational facilities, but had not made a formal plan for consideration. The Commission  
 3 discussed the Volunteers Green park and the Browns Court baseball area. The Commission agreed  
 4 that a new facility capable of being expanded would be a good idea, but noted that land is not cheap.  
 5 Cousins said that one lesson learned with all the flooding is that many culverts are undersized. Urbanik  
 6 said there are not any bridge culverts planned for next year. He said that a recent Jones Mill stream  
 7 dredging project cost \$7,500 for the clean up after this year’s flooding. He said that the total claim for  
 8 repairs from this summer’s flooding was \$179,000 and that the town will get 90% back from FEMA for  
 9 the repairs.

10  
 11 The Planning Commission discussed the Police Department budget. In response to a question about  
 12 the number of police vehicles, Urbanik said that, with the officers being on-call 24 hours a day, the  
 13 number of cars makes the system work smoothly.

14  
 15 The Planning Commission returned to the discussion about the Winooski riverbank stabilization and  
 16 suggested that, based on the fact that there have been reductions in the highway budget, the river  
 17 stabilization item should be returned to the FY2015 plan. That way, if grant funds cannot be obtained,  
 18 the town can proceed with the stabilization, which is an important Planning Commission priority.

19  
 20 Tellstone brought up the concept of town-wide financial support for the water and sewer system. He  
 21 noted that there would have to be a large discussion about any town-wide contribution but that it is hard  
 22 to envision current system users being able to handle the increased costs. Urbanik noted that the  
 23 expenses have stabilized following an increase in debt over the past ten years. He added that the  
 24 revenue is steady. With a small growth in the system, the costs for uses should stabilize. Urbanik also  
 25 said that the state revolving loan has been approved for the water storage tank. The Planning  
 26 Commission members agreed that the well house chlorine contact upgrade and water storage tank  
 27 should not be in the capital budget until there is a specific way to capitalize the project in another way  
 28 than an additional cost to current users.

29  
 30 The Planning Commission asked Gent to prepare a memo to the Selectboard’s public January 6<sup>th</sup>  
 31 hearing including the Planning Commission’s request to reinstate the \$35,000 for the Winooski River  
 32 stabilization and to remove the capital improvements for the water department from the capital budget.

33  
 34 Urbanik left at this time.

35  
 36 **Work Session: Richmond Zoning Regulations – Section 6.8 – Flood Hazard Overlay District**

37 The Planning Commission deferred the work session until its next meeting.

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 40 **Meeting Date and Agenda for Next Meeting**

41 The Planning Commission set the next meeting date for Tuesday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, since the first regular  
 42 meeting would take place on January 1<sup>st</sup>. The primary item will be the work session on Section 6.8:  
 43 Flood Hazard Overlay District, which did not get discussed tonight.

44  
 45 Gent also encouraged Planning Commission members to attend the Arrowwood presentation of the  
 46 ECOS natural resources inventory project, which will take place on Monday, January 13<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM in the  
 47 Richmond Free Library.

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 49  
 50 **Adjournment**

51 Tellstone made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Cousins. So voted. The meeting adjourned at  
 52 9:14 PM.

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 54  
 55 Respectfully submitted by Cathleen Gent, Town Planner/Staff to the DRB