

1 Richmond Planning Commission

2 Regular Meeting

3 Wednesday, August 20, 2014

4 Approved Minutes

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

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

8 **Others Present:** Maureen Kangley, Jeff Forward, Chris Granda, John Rankin, Rod West, Chris
9 Gordon, Betsy Harding, Joy Reap, Clare Rock (Town Planner/Staff to the DRB)

10
11 **7:05 PM Fausel opened the meeting**

12
13 **Public Comment:** n/a

14
15 **Administrative Items:**

16
17 Rock shared the following items:

18
19 Email notification of “Save the Date Municipal Day at ANR, November 13, 2014”

20 VLCT Town Fair Announcement

21 Overview of Municipal Planning Grant (MGP) – Rock distributed an outline of updating the
22 Richmond Town Plan, which could be the basis of an MGP application. The Town would apply for
23 funding to help update the town plan.

24
25 **Meeting Minutes – August 6, 2014**

26
27 *Cousins moved to approve the meeting minutes, Tellstone seconded. All in favor, so voted.*

28
29 **Energy Discussion**

30 Fausel welcomed the guests and provided an overview of the work plan of the PC which includes
31 finishing the FHOD, Gateway and some other zoning changes.

32
33 Chris Granda introduced Chris Gordon from VEIC and Jeff Forward, Town Energy Coordinator.
34 Granda stated that he was a former VEIC employee and is currently a contractor with VEIC and
35 Forward is a contractor with VEIC. Granda referenced the two documents he distributed to PC
36 members titled: Proposed Energy Efficiency Improvements Zoning for Residential New
37 Construction and the Tiered Comparison and Incentives document which provides an overview of
38 how Energy Code Plus is different to the Residential Building Energy Standards (RBES).

39
40 Currently, VT requires RBES, but there is currently no inspection program. Currently a recent
41 change now requires builders to provide a RBES certificate to demonstrate compliance for a local
42 CO, which is basically an honor system. Granda would like the Richmond PC to require new homes
43 to meet energy standards as a provision within the zoning regulations. In part for consumer
44 protection. Granda referenced a study of standards and compliance with the RBES code. The study
45 found a rate of compliance of 74%. So over ¼ of new homes do not meet the energy code.

46
47 Gordon stated the last update to the energy code was 2011, and will be updated every 3 years, next
48 one in 2015. In addition to the training VEIC provides, it also is implementing the Code Plus
49 program to ensure greater compliance.

50
51 The proposed ordinance would not cover commercial buildings. The effort to meet the Energy Code
52 Plus over the RBES is only incremental. Energy Code Plus requires builders to install Energy Star
53 appliances vs. the federal government standard (incremental cost \$300 - \$600 for the central heating

1 and cooling, the ducts need to be installed in a conditioned space.) Additional appliances (i.e washer
2 and dryer) installed should be Energy Star also. Also buildings need to be blower door tested for air
3 leakage. The cheapest and easiest way to make a home more energy efficient is to ensure there is no
4 air leakage. For the energy code plus requirement, VEIC would provide the blower door system so
5 help the process.

6
7 Discussion followed about the incremental costs to the homeowner/builder to build to code. Due to
8 a variety of different factors it's hard to present a simple cost-benefit analysis; Gordon stated that
9 the incremental cost was around \$2,000.

10
11 Hinesburg will host a public hearing on Sept 18, 2014 for the adoption of the Energy Code Plus
12 regulation. No other towns to date have adopted regulations like this one being proposed. Gordon
13 mentioned that it would be good to have a variance component and clarified that log homes are
14 exempted. Currently about half of all homes in Vermont have participated in the Energy Code
15 process.

16
17 Granda believes this will make housing more affordable as it will decrease the energy usage and
18 increase the durability of the house and will also work to help work toward decrease the state's
19 greenhouses gasses.

20
21 John Rankin, received a copy of the proposal from Rock. Rankin asked about whether the proposed
22 regulation would apply to the renovation to an existing home vs. a new home. This has not been
23 clarified yet. He believes that currently there are other regulations in place such as FHOD and
24 setbacks and etc and cautioned Richmond of over regulations and questioned whether Richmond
25 would be handing off zoning rules to another organization which may change over time.

26
27 Cousins asked about volunteer assistance. Home performance with Energy Star is a volunteer
28 program which current exists to help homeowners.

29
30 Further discussion about the current compliance of recent homes built in Richmond.

31
32 Maureen Kangley read a prepared statement in which she questioned the proposal and cautioned the
33 town about this type of regulation.

34
35 Fausel thanked the guests for attending and sharing the information.

36
37
38 **Flood Hazard Overlay District Regulations**

39 The PC reviewed the latest Final Draft. Rock will make the minimal changes and
40 Get a copy to Rebecca Pfeiffer tomorrow for DEC review. The PC will hold a public information
41 session at the next meeting to gather feedback before the Public Hearing.

42
43 **Gateway District**

44
45 Joy Reap provided an update on the State proposal; their property was not short listed by the State
46 for the new lab.

47
48 Rod West bought up the context of the Gateway and the character of the area. The rear of the
49 Reap's property has more in common with the school property.

50

1 Bruce LaBounty recommended that the two lots across the street should be included in the Gateway
2 District. Cousins objected to including these lots within the Gateway. Discussion followed about the
3 history of the zoning process and the compromise which led to the current district boundaries.

4
5 The PC reviewed the draft Gateway regulations dated August 14, 2014. Discussion followed of the
6 view of the property from the highway, Reap had photos which show that you can hardly see the
7 highway from the property.

8
9 Discussion of the process followed. Rock suggested the PC discuss methods to gather public
10 feedback at the next PC meeting, such as either providing alternatives and reminded the PC about
11 the scope of changes (conservative/minimal changes vs. larger changes) and the timeframe in which
12 the PC stated they would make changes within the letter they provided the State on behalf of the
13 Reaps.

14
15 **Adjourn**

16
17 *Tellstone made a motion to adjourn, seconded by LaBounty. So voted.*

18
19 The meeting ending at 9:40 PM.

20
21 Respectfully submitted by Clare Rock, Town Planner/Staff to the DRB