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**TOWN OF CHARLOTTE  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
August 20, 2015**

*Minutes are subject to correction by the Charlotte Planning Commission. Changes, if any, will be recorded in the minutes of the next Planning Commission meeting.*

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jeff McDonald, Chair; Gerald Bouchard, Charles Pughe, and Paul Landler. **ABSENT:** Marty Illick, & Donna Stearns.

**ADMINISTRATION:** Jeannine McCrumb, Town Planner/Zoning Administrator.

**OTHERS:** Michael Russell, Howard Seaver, Karen Frost, Carrie Spear, , Frank Tenney, Mathew Zucker, Fritz Tegatz, Gary Farnsworth, Dean Bloch, T.J, Whalen, Lane Morrison, Wolfger Schneider, David Kenyon, Marilyn Richardson, Richard Amore, and Eric Finley.

**SITE VISIT:**

- **Walk of the East and West Charlotte Villages for the purposes of viewing the potential boundaries for Village Designation. The walk was facilitated by Richard Amore from the State Community Planning & Revitalization group.**

**AGENDA ITEMS:**

- **Proposed Town Plan Amendment Discussion**
- **Village Center Designation Recommendation**
- **Energy Chapter**
- **Proposed Zoning Regulations Amendment Discussion**
- **Conditional Uses**
- **Energy Facility Siting Standards/ Site Plan Review**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. McDonald, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05p.m.

**VILLAGE DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:**

Richard Amore, representative from the State's Community Planning & Revitalization Group, explained that the purpose of the Village Designation program is to maintain historic settlement patterns, which preserves Vermont's open spaces. The goal of the program is to provide tax credits for the purposes of reenergizing and rehabbing existing infrastructure in village centers.

Mr. Amore explained that this specific program only benefits existing civic/ commercial uses, which are considered historic, and are located in the core of the village. The property has to be income-based to be eligible for program benefits. The program does not apply to residential uses, unless they are multi-family homes. Mr. Amore explained that "historic" is defined as a building constructed prior to 1986.

47

48 Tax credit benefits are broken down into the following four categories:

49 10% credit for rehab

50 25% credit for façade improvements

51 50% credit for technology improvements

52 50% credit for code improvements

53

54 Mr. Amore stated that the Downtown Development Board meets the fourth Monday of  
55 each month to review Village Designation applications. In order for applications for tax  
56 credits to be considered, an application for Village Designation would need to be  
57 received by the fourth Monday in June. The Town Plan must contain a statement of  
58 interest in pursuing Village Designation before an application to the Downtown  
59 Development Board can be made. Mr. Amore explained that the applications for tax  
60 credits are reviewed yearly on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

61

62 It was explained that the Village Designation program is not regulatory and that village  
63 boundaries may be revised at any time. Applying for the tax credits offered by the  
64 program is completely optional.

65

66 When applying for Designation, Mr. Amore stated that the Town should limit the village  
67 designation boundaries to the core civic/historical structures, as the Downtown  
68 Development Board is conservative in their delineations. In East Charlotte, the boundary  
69 “anchors” were seemingly the Catholic Church (south) , Steve Denton’s contractor’s  
70 yard (north) , and Tenney’s Snack Bar (east). In the West Charlotte Village, the  
71 boundaries seemed to be the Little Garden Market (east) following Ferry Road west to  
72 the four properties surrounding the intersection of Greenbush / Ferry Road. Mr. Amore  
73 explained that both sides of the street are typically included in the delineation.

74

75 There is discussion as to whether to add a “central village”, which would include the  
76 museum property and multi-family/ studio space, located at the intersection of Church  
77 Hill Road and Hinesburg Road. Mr. Amore said that it wouldn’t hurt to add it to the  
78 application, but the statement of intent to consider Village Designation in the Town Plan  
79 should specifically mention the East, Central, and West Villages.

80

81 Mrs. McCrumb explained that there will be more opportunity to receive public comment  
82 on Village Designation at the September 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

83

#### 84 **PROPOSED TOWN PLAN AMENDMENT DISCUSSION**

85

86 Mr. McDonald explained that the Planning Commission is working towards an  
87 amendment to the Town Plan and Land Use Regulations for Town Meeting 2016. This  
88 will only be a partial update. Changes to the following sections are proposed:

#### 89 Town Plan

90 - Add Statement regarding interest in seeking Village Designation

91 - Amend Energy Section ( today and tomorrow)

#### 92 Land Use Regulations

- 93 - Energy project siting standards- addition
- 94 - "Oops Book"- grammatical and punctuation errors corrected
- 95 - Conditional uses- consideration for changing uses in Village Commercial and
- 96 Commercial/ Light Industrial Districts from conditional use to permitted use; also
- 97 involves changes to dimensional standards
- 98 - Two-family dwelling and density- consideration to allow two-family dwellings
- 99 wherever single-family is permitted or by district

100

101 Mr. Russell asked if there would be more opportunity to receive public input. Mrs.  
102 McCrumb explained that the further comments will be received at the September 3<sup>rd</sup>  
103 meeting. Eventually the proposal will be passed to the Selectboard for review.  
104 Comments can be received at the Selectboard level as well.

105

106 T.J. Whalen suggested advertising the meeting in other venues to heighten awareness and  
107 build public participation.

108

109 "DISCUSSION REGARDING "OOPS BOOK" UPDATES:

110 Mrs. McCrumb explained that the "Oops Book" was split into two sections, insubstantial  
111 changes (grammatical errors), and substantial changes. The Planning Commission would  
112 only focus on insubstantial changes for the update planned for March. The substantial  
113 changes could be addressed during the complete Town Plan/ Land Use Regulations  
114 scheduled for 2016.

115

116 The Planning Commission members agreed to review the "Oops Book" spreadsheet and  
117 provide comments at the September 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

118

119 PROPOSED ZONING REGULATION AMENDMENT DISCUSSION:

120 There was discussion of eliminating the differences between the east of Route 7 and west  
121 of Route 7 Village Commercial districts.

122

123 Mr. Landler voiced concerned that opening the west of Route 7 Village Commercial  
124 properties, to the uses allowed east of Route 7, could potentially have a large impact on  
125 the character of the West Charlotte Village. Mr. Landler was concerned that commercial  
126 activity on Route 7 would detract from the existing businesses on Ferry Road.

127

128 Mrs. McCrumb spoke to the possibility of creating a separate zoning district for the  
129 commercial properties east of Route 7.

130

131 Mrs. McCrumb explained that the approval of any changes to the regulation will have to  
132 be approved by the Town Voters.

133

134 DISCUSSION OF TWO-DWELLINGS WHEREVER SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTS  
135 ARE ALLOWED

136

137 Mr. Tegatz expressed concerned that opening the door for two-family dwellings, even on  
138 small lots, could have unintended negative consequences. In particular, Mr. Tegatz was

139 concerned with the potential issues of having properties that are not owner occupied, and  
140 two-family dwellings in PRDS.

141

142 Mrs. McCrumb suggested limiting the break in density exclusively to the village districts.

143

144 Mr. Russell suggested that adding limiting factors, such as not allowing two-family  
145 dwellings in PRDS could ease concerns. Mr. Russell stated that the Community  
146 Developmental Group supports allowing two-family dwellings where single-family  
147 homes are allowed.

148

149 **DISCUSSION OF ENERGY STANDARDS:**

150 Mrs. McCrumb explained that the current regulations do not include siting standards for  
151 renewable energy projects. In the event that legislation is passed that allows Town's to  
152 have greater participation in energy siting, our Land Use Regulations must provide some  
153 guidelines.

154

155 Mr. Tegatz asked if shadow easements would come into play regarding siting standards.  
156 Mrs. McCrumb explained that the Town would not be able to control shadow easements  
157 as they are between private landowners, but could warn applicants of the dangers of  
158 constructing solar panels close to property lines. Mr. Tegatz also suggested that language  
159 requiring the maintenance of landscaping and screening be added to the regulations.

160

161 Mr. Tenney asked if the regulations should include a statement discouraging renewable  
162 energy projects in the Route 7 Scenic Overlay District. Mrs. McCrumb asked if similar  
163 language should be incorporated regarding the Seasonal Home Management District.

164

165 **DISCUSSION REGARDING AMENDMENTS TO ENERGY SECTION OF THE**  
166 **TOWN PLAN**

167

168 The Planning Commission reviewed the draft update to the energy section in the Town  
169 Plan. Mr. Pughe's comments were addressed and several edits were made.

170

171 Mrs. McCrumb explained that there will be one more public hearing on the proposed  
172 changes discussed tonight on September 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Planning Commission will hold a  
173 formal hearing on October 1st. After the formal hearing, the proposal will be submitted to  
174 the Selectboard for review.

175

176 **ADJOURNMENT**

177 The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

178

179 Minutes respectfully submitted, Britney Tenney, Planning and Zoning Assistant.

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