**VILLAGE OF OLD BENNINGTON**

**PLANNING COMMISSION**

**First Church Barn, Monument Circle**

MINUTES

FOR

MONDAY, APRIL 8TH 2024

**Members present:**

Nancy Coseo –Chair, Galen Jones - Vice Chair, Carl Feltz, Renny Ponvert

**Members absent:** Brian Scheetz, Deborah Towslee (Administrative Officer)

**Community Members present**: Anne Slattery

**Call to Order** 7:04 PM.

**Changes to Agenda:** Ms. Coseo suggested adding / moving the following:

1. Moving the Bylaw discussion to top of agenda as the final draft is not ready.
2. Adding an update on Trustee and Planning Commission changes in officers and discussion on effective transition period.
3. Adding a brief overview of a potential permit application from 43 Monument Ave. (no permit has been received)

Commissioners unanimously agreed to changes.

**Public Comment**: None

**Motion: To approve Minutes of the Planning Commission Regular Meeting March 11, 2024.** Motion to approve by Mr. Jones, second by Mr. Feltz. Approved unanimously.

**Rental Registry**: The Commissioners began substantive discussion regarding the merits of establishing a Rental Registry for the Village, as many Vermont municipalities have done. At the 4/2/24 Board of Trustees meeting, the Planning Commission recommended that Village Officials start the conversation regarding writing an Ordinance that would create a Registry. The Board of Trustees requested the Planning Commission continue due diligence around the subject and take additional steps to get public input. To that end, Mr. Ponvert agreed to continue review of other municipality’s Rental Registry Ordinances and begin work on a draft for Old Bennington. The Planning Commission will keep Rental Registry as an agenda item for May, June, and July 2024 meetings. The Commission looks forward to Villager feedback and discussion on this topic at these meetings.

**Home Act:** The Commissioners discussed follow up actions to a discussion at the Board of Trustees meeting on 4/2/24. At that meeting, Village officials discussed the potential impact of the Home Act on density and development in Old Bennington, with particular emphasis on water and sewer capabilities. Since water and sewer are provided by the Town of Bennington, the Planning Commission seeks to engage in dialogue with the Town to better understand and align on what is possible and practical for both the Village and Town. Anne Slattery agreed to reach out to Stu Hurd to determine appropriate individuals to start that conversation with.

**Transition:** The Commissionersdiscussed openings on the Planning Commission and the Board of Trustees. Anne Slattery gave an update on the Trustee candidates that will be voted on at the Annual Meeting. The Planning Commission sent one recommendation to the Trustees to replace outgoing commissioner Nancy Coseo.

The Commissioners re-visited the discussion regarding the Village Tree Warden. While writing proposed bylaw amendments, the Commission discussed streamlining the process for homeowners by having just one point of contact for a tree question. As a component of that streamlining, the Commission will recommend to the Trustees that the position lie within the Planning Commission. Renny Ponvert expressed a strong interest in the position. All agreed he would be a good candidate and the Commission will recommend him to the Trustees.

A question came up regarding the resolution / next steps for the gate installed at 88 Monument Ave. The Town installed the gate to prevent traffic from impeding new grass growth this spring that will restore the yard. The homeowners have expressed an interest in building a fenced area (see March 11th minutes). The Commissioners agreed the current gate should stay temporarily to serve the above-mentioned purpose. The Planning Commission with do a full review of a fence application and how it relates to the current gate when the application is received.

**Motion to Adjourn**: Made by Mr. Ponvert, second by Mr. Jones. Agreed unanimously at 8:46 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Coseo

Planning Commission Chair