

**VILLAGE OF OLD BENNINGTON  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
First Church Barn, Monument Circle**

MINUTES  
FOR  
MONDAY, MAY 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Members present:**

Nancy Coseo –Chair, Galen Jones - Vice Chair, Carl Feltz (via telephone), Renny Ponvert, Brian Scheetz, Chris Ponessi

**Members absent:**

**Community Members present:** Megan Schwarzkopf (via Zoom), Anne Slattery

**Call to Order** 7:01 PM.

The Commission welcomed the newest Planning Commissioner, Chris Ponessi. Mr Ponessi brings relevant engineering, land use and regulations experience to the Planning Commission.

**Changes to Agenda:** Ms. Coseo suggested adding the following due to information gathered after the agenda was posted.

1. Lawn installations at 40 Monument Ave.
  2. Next steps for permit application for 88 Monument Ave
  3. Update on shielding for Bank St solar installation.
  4. Deborah Towslee, Zoning Administrator resignation
- Commissioners unanimously agreed to changes.

**Public Comment:** None

**Motion: To approve Minutes of the Planning Commission Regular Meeting APRIL 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024.** Motion to approve by Mr. Jones, second by Mr. Scheetz. Approved unanimously.

**Zoning Bylaw proposed amendments:**

The Commission completed a final review and made document changes to ensure readiness for a public hearing on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The public hearing will be warned appropriately per Vermont law, and all materials will be made available on the VOB website. Villagers will be encouraged to email questions and comments regarding the proposed amendments prior to the meeting; villagers will also be encouraged to attend the meeting on June 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **Monument Restoration Update:**

Ms. Coseo shared details of conversations with Mary Lou Chicote, Site Administrator for the Monument and Jamie Duggan, Director of Historic Preservation for the State.

Mr. Duggan has recently received a Phase 2 report on the scope of work needed to be done; longer range plans for the restoration will be developed based on that report. The repairs needed are extensive and will be costly, according to Jamie and Mary Lou.

Jamie has committed to reviewing the plans with the Planning Commission when appropriate. The Commissioners discussed the safety fence that had been installed and the safety walkway to be installed shortly. All agreed that a follow-up email to Jamie and Mary Lou was warranted. This email will request a re-visit to the fence design with the goal of installing a structure that will better reflect Old Bennington's historic design district while not compromising safety.

### **Village and Town Density:**

Mr. Jones reached out to Dan Monks, Planning Director of Bennington to have a discussion regarding the Home Act impact on increased density. Since water and sewer are provided by the Town of Bennington, the discussion with Mr. Monks was to better understand what is possible and practical for both the Village and Town. More specifically, does the Town have water and sewer capacity for potential development in both the Town and Village. Mr. Monks said there were no current plans / needs to increase water and sewer capacity. Mr. Ponessi reported that when a municipality reaches 90% capacity, it must upgrade its facilities / systems. The town is reportedly at 70% capacity now.

### **Lawn Installations at 40 Monument Ave**

The Commission discussed two wooden, ornamental installations that are in violation of Zoning Bylaw Section 54. B. Ornamentation. Mr. Ponvert agreed to discuss with the owners in the coming week.

### **46 Bank Street Solar Installation Shielding**

Ms. Coseo had a conversation with John Butler from Green Mountain Solar to get an update on landscaping to shield the installation that the company had agreed to last November. Mr. Butler said that GMS has hired a contractor and hopes to have the work done in the June timeframe. The plan will reflect the schematic that was presented at the November Special Meeting regarding the solar installation.

### **Permit Application for fence at 88 Monument Ave**

A permit application was recently received from the owners. Once determined it is complete, a public hearing will be scheduled.

### **Mr. Ponvert suggested additional agenda items for the next Planning Commission meeting to include Old First Church renovations and Rental Registries.**

**Motion to elect Galen Jones as Presiding Officer (Chair):** Made by Mr. Ponvert, second by Mr. Scheetz. Agreed unanimously.

**Motion to elect Brian Scheetz as Vice Chair:** Made by Mr. Ponvert, second by Mr. Feltz. Agreed unanimously.

**Motion to Adjourn:** Made by Mr. Scheetz, second by Mr. Ponvert. Agreed unanimously at 9:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Coseo  
Planning Commissioner