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Town of New Haven
PLANNING COMMISSION JOINT MEETING WITH
ADDISON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING ENERGY COMMITTEE
New Haven Town Hall
Monday, December 13, 2021
Meeting Minutes

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Planning Commission Members Present:

Co-chair Benj Putnam, Kathy Cahill, Maggie Eaton, Bev Landon.

Absent: Pat Palmer, Rob Litch

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Staff Present:

Peggy Connor, Zoning Administrator & Minutes

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Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC) Energy Committee Members

present: Energy Committee Chair Jeremy Grip, James Dayton (Panton delegate), Rich Warren (Starksboro delegate), Cheryl Brinkman (Vergennes delegate); ACRPC Energy Planner Maddison Shropshire

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Visitors Present:

John Madden

Jeff Glassberg

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Call to Order:

Planning Commission co-chair Benj Putnam called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Energy Committee Chair Jeremy Grip explained that Enhanced Energy Planning was established by the legislature in 2016. Regions and towns with approved energy plans will have a greater say in state decisions made by the Public Utility Commission regarding the siting of renewable energy generation facilities. This is due to the plan being given a higher legal standard (“substantial deference”) than a typical legal standard (“due consideration”). Enhanced Energy Plans contain an analysis of current energy use, targets for future energy use, and strategies for reaching future energy use targets. They also include a mapping effort that will help inform the future siting of renewable energy facilities.

Jeremy congratulated the Planning Commission for its work on the town’s Enhanced Energy Plan noting that, following his own review of the document, he anticipated a perfunctory approval process. James Dayton echoed Jeremy’s comments, adding that given New Haven’s recent history with solar development, the community should take pride in the Enhanced Energy Plan as a professionally written document that will serve the town well. Benj Putnam acknowledged Maggie Eaton for all her work on the Town’s energy plan, the result of which is largely due to Maggie’s efforts.

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Public Comments:

New Haven resident John Madden noted the low voter turnout on July 28, 2021 (26 ballots cast out of 1,379 registered voters) and suggested a revote by Australian ballot on Town Meeting Day in March 2022. Maggie Eaton explained that when the process began back in September 2018, an Energy Committee was established, and since that time there have been 8 drafts of the energy plan posted on the Town’s website, changes and comments consistently included in the Planning Commission meeting minutes, requests for public input on Front Porch Forum, multiple public meetings of the Planning Commission with Development Review and Selectboards, Town attorney, property owners, Senators Hardy, Bray and Smith, representatives of Green Mountain Power, Efficiency Vermont, VELCO, as well as numerous workshops and virtual meetings. Following two public meetings, the Planning Commission approved the proposed Enhanced Energy Plan, submitted the document to the Selectboard who

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55 in turn held another public hearing prior to the Town vote in July. Maggie concluded that the low
56 voter turnout was not reflective of the public being unaware of the process or for lack of an
57 opportunity to comment. Benj Putnam agreed higher voter turnout is always preferred; however,
58 the vote was properly warned and therefore the Town is bound by the result. He added that
59 there is a provision to petition the results within 30 days of the vote, but no one filed a petition
60 within the statutory 30-day timeframe. Jeremy Grip concurred there is an avenue for calling for a
61 revote by petition but since the Town has officially held a warned vote, he saw no reason not to
62 proceed with the review process.

63
64 Following discussion, ACRPC members took a short recess to vote on the proposed energy
65 plan while ACRPC Energy Planner Maddison Shropshire conducted a brief municipal
66 consultation with the Planning Commission on how best ACRPC can support the Town by
67 offering specific trainings, workshops, assistance in implementing the Energy Plan, prioritizing
68 projects for the federal Build Back Better funds, etc.

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70 Noting that the state's Comprehensive Energy Plan is revised on a 6-year basis, Maggie Eaton
71 suggested that ACRPC could assist in incorporating the revised set of standards into the Town's
72 Energy Plan and providing resources and grant funding opportunities.

73
74 **ACRPC Energy Committee members rejoined the meeting and voted unanimously to**
75 **recommend approval of New Haven's Enhanced Energy Plan to the full commission in**
76 **January.**

77
78 Maggie Eaton suggested that once approved and certified, the Planning Commission meet with
79 the Development Review Board to review provisions contained in the Enhanced Energy Plan
80 that relate to their work.

81
82 **ADJOURNMENT**

83 Kathy Cahill moved to adjourn; Maggie Eaton seconded. **MOTION PASSED BY UNANIMOUS**
84 **VOICE VOTE 4-0** (K. Cahill, B. Putnam, M. Eaton, B. Landon)
85 Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

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87 Respectfully submitted,
88 Peggy Connor

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91 Benj Putnam

Maggie Eaton

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95 Bev Landon

Kathy Cahill