

**HYDE PARK  
TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
September 2, 2015**

*All minutes are draft until approved by the planning commission;  
please check future minutes for the approval of these minutes.*

Members Present: Greg Paus, Chair (6:30 p.m.); Bob Malbon, Vice-Chair; Kevin Fitzgerald, Vicki Emerson and Eric Williams  
Members Absent: None  
Staff: Ron Rodjenski, Zoning Administrator  
Others: None

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Bob opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

1. **Welcome and Public Comment.** No public comment or changes to the agenda.
2. **Discuss Hyde Park Solar CPG.** Carol presented a handout and provided additional information on the proposed Hyde Park Solar Project and the 45-day notice to the Public Service Board. Hyde Park Electric has benefited by working alongside Stowe Electric by sharing legal and financial staff but both projects are independent of each other. HPE is working with experts from Encore Development to assist in the site selection and development of the project. Hyde Park Electric is in a very competitive process and a successful project will have substantial savings to electric customers compared to the high cost of continuing to buy 100% of the electricity from other entities. The best site has been selected on Silver Ridge Road to move through the state's Certificate of Public Good process. A secondary site, which is not being actively pursued, is on the Lanphere Farm. Carol submitted a copy of private letter ruling which discusses the utilities potential right to offer a 30% tax credit to investors in a solar project – even after the current federal credits expire in 2016. If the new solar system is online by December 31, 2016, then the 30% credits are hopefully going to be offered for an additional 7 years. Carol noted that the village voters approved a \$3 million bond and \$3.5 million was approved by the Feds. Carol noted that the Vermont PSB likes seeing utilities work together as has been the case with Stowe and Hyde Park. Vicki expressed concern for aesthetics and is generally against solar farms. Kevin noted that Chauvin's solar array is already approved along Silver Ridge Road on the same parcel. Carol expressed the need to push forward as it is highly competitive process and under strict deadlines to get on line by the federal deadline. Vicki stated that Vermont has worked hard to protect the environment and these types of projects result in negative impacts. Carol stated that this site is the best location for the project and the location took into consideration environmental issues, screening capacity and access to the three-phase corridor. Carol stated that almost 1,400 rate payers that will benefit for this project. Kevin was concerned that Chauvin's project and the Village project combine to create a bigger negative impact along the road. Carol stated that the two projects could not be combined and it is located in a commercial area. Carol is asking for support to show that the project has community support and the project can move forward without delay to save an estimated \$1.5 million for customers. A complete application due this February. Vicki asked if there could be screening and Carol stated she would do everything in their power to screen the facility but the panels can not be shaded in order to operate properly. Kevin stated that since the project was within view of his families' property; their home value would be reduced with two solar arrays in the same location. Carol felt that it would be harder to screen Chauvin's array along the road than it will be to work with landscape architects later to screen the Village project. The 45-day CPG deadline ends September 21<sup>st</sup>. Carol stated that HPE is not near the statutory 15% cap for net-metered generation but Chauvin's project gets close. The Commission decided to wait for Greg Paus before discussing the request for a letter of support.
3. **Introduction of Tasha Wallis, New LCPC Executive Director** – Ms. Wallis introduced herself as Morrisville resident and provided her previous work experiences. She stated that she is excited to be working with local communities after many statewide positions in government and private business. Tasha explained that she recognizes the benefit of economic development but also knows

that development needs to be accepted by the local community, and as regional planners, the staff will help towns find the right balance. Tasha noted that a new regional plan draft is being discussed Sept 22<sup>nd</sup> and the commissioners were welcome to attend and provide comments.

**Greg Paus appeared at this point, 6:30 p.m.**

4. **Discuss Hyde Park Solar CPG – Continued.** Bob updated Greg on the earlier discussion. Greg stated that Chauvin's will be right on the road in a rural area but the PSB determined that there is no undue adverse effect. Greg stated that he was familiar with the Village project and the damage has already been done by the Chauvin solar array along the road since the Village project is set back in a flat area. Carol stated that this is a prime location for the solar array and Hyde Park Electric will do the best to screen the project. Motion by Bob Malbon to send a letter of support for the Village 1Mw Solar Project with the Village commitment that the screening will be done as best as possible and the Commission invited to participate in the screening design. Seconded by Greg. Discussion: Kevin expressed his objection to having two solar arrays on one parcel. Greg noted that the planning commission objected to Chauvin and the PSB still approved it. Eric asked about screening and Carol stated that the arrays can not be shaded. Voting: 3 in favor (Bob, Greg, Eric), 0 against, 2 abstained (Kevin due to there being two arrays on one parcel and Vicki due to personal & philosophical concerns), motion passed.
5. **Review minutes from July 1, 2015 –** Motion by Kevin to approve the July 1, 2015 minutes, as written. Seconded by Vicki. Voting: 5 in favor, 0 against.
6. **Review Town Plan Goals and Future PC Projects** –The Commission decided to begin to review the of the **2012 Plan** for updates, goals accomplished to date and recommendations for the next 5-year period. Ron noted that the Plan expires in 2017 and work should begin soon to identify areas for review or topics to add. Ron asked if the Commission wanted to discuss the Trustees decision to separate the planning and zoning functions in Hyde Park. The Commission stated that they understood that was only a decision of the Village trustees. Greg explained that in January 2015 the Trustees decided to form their own Village PC and DRB. Greg felt that the Town Planning Commission would not take on this issue. Ron noted the Selectboard is currently reviewing the proposed town-only zoning bylaw, dated July 1, 2015 which was approved by the Planning Commission. The Selectboard is waiting for the town attorney's review before moving to public hearings and adoption. **LVRT** - The trailhead location along the south side of Depot St Extension is being reviewed again by the town attorney and VTrans attorneys after being stuck on environmental liability concerns for almost 2 years. The trailhead might see movement toward construction if a revised one-year lease with VTrans to perform environmental testing only is accepted at the 09/10 Selectboard meeting. **Green Mountain Byways** – The Commission decided to learn more about this topic before getting involved with other towns. Ron will invite LCPC to a future commission meeting. Greg asked about the planned and designed **pocket park on Main St** and Ron thought that the side-judges had agreed to add it to the courthouse plans, but nothing is happening. Greg will contact David Williams for an update, noting that there are three benches in storage waiting to be installed on a concrete pad and plantings have been designed by the town tree warden. Kevin mentioned that the Historic Sites Committee was discussing the purchase of software to catalog historic properties in town. Devon Coleman, State Architectural Historian, suggested to Kevin at a recent Preservation Trust of Vermont meeting that with an **historic preservation ordinance** the town could qualify as a **Certified Local Government (CLG)**. CLG towns have greater access to preservation grant programs, including funds to update the existing historic sites inventory. Kevin agreed to draft a letter of support to the Selectboard recommending that the town pursue CLG status and the Commission will review the draft in October.
7. **Other Business** – None.
8. **Adjourn** - Motion by Kevin to adjourn at 7:30 p.m., seconded by Bob, so adjourned. The next meeting is October 7, 2015.

Respectfully submitted by Ron Rodjenski