

TOWN OF SAINT GEORGE
21 BARBER ROAD
ST. GEORGE, VERMONT

ST GEORGE PLANNING COMMISSION Meeting Minutes

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 22, 2022

In Attendance: Chantal Beliveau (interim chair), Bill Newton (member), Sarah Tischler (selectboard member and St. George Connect member), and via speaker phone Abel Russ (DRB member, St. George Connect member and interested in joining the planning commission)

7:15-8:15

Convened a little late due to some technical difficulties with the main entrance to town hall.

7:15 – 7:20 Acknowledge and approve Nina resignation.

Nina Frisca has announced her resignation from the planning board via an email. Although an official letter hasn't been received the board acknowledged her wish to resign and Chantal will let the Selectboard know to make it official at their Thursday meeting.

7:20-7:25 Acknowledge and discuss steps for Abel to join the board.

Abel Russ is interested in joining the planning commission and was in attendance at this meeting. Chantal Beliveau noted that his official appointment to the board needs to be made by the Selectboard. Sarah Tischler mentioned that his appointment to the board was already on the selectboards agenda for this Thursday (02/24/2022).

7:25-7:30 Discuss ways to get more board members.

This conversation segued into Sarah Tischler discussing the *St. George Connects'* unofficial plans to organize a community gathering after town meeting on April 30th where different boards and groups that the town helps support through the budget could have small booths/tables to showcase themselves and inform the community about themselves. Chantal asked about joining the Saint George Connect group and noted interest in setting up a booth/table on behalf of the planning board

7:30-8:00 Discuss recent interest in Town land and other planning-related matters by community group "*St. George Connect*" and the planning boards responsibilities (if any).

Sarah Tischler outlined that the general purpose of the group is to get the Saint George community input on the future of Saint George, including what they would like to see the Town-owned lands used for. There is some available federal and state funds and a number of grants available to help small towns determine, develop, and create their visions for their town centers, but we have to start with the basics of what people want. The group is developing a plan for public outreach to help every community member have a voice. *St George Connect* intends to set up a booth/table at the Town meeting community event for public out-reach and has discussed creating a mailing, front porch forum, and using a location at the store to get the community more involved.

Chantal Beliveau asked if there was anything in particular that sparked this group to convene as she had heard a rumor that it may be from interested businesses wanting to buy a parcel. It seems this rumor was false, however there has been interest by some local businesses in moving their businesses to this area which should also be considered in the overall master plan of the area. Chantal Beliveau also noted that there is also the need to include an access road to the town well from the town lands which should also be included in the master plan.

Sarah Tischler noted that St. George Connect sort of morphed out of the fact that both she and Abel Russ are members of a Regional Conservation Partnership group. The group looks to identify lands in the Champlain Valley Towns (South Burlington, Williston, Hinesburg, Charlotte, Richmond and Saint George) that would benefit the general public if it could be conserved, and look for ways to have conserved land from town to town be contiguous with each other. Sarah then presented a map of the Champlain Valley Partnership's focus area for prime areas of land to be conserved based on various Vermont natural resources as shown on the available state maps, and our town of Saint George is almost entirely in that focus area. She also noted that Saint George is the only town with no lands currently conserved. Abel Russ noted that the Town will soon have some conserved lands from a recently approved subdivision.

Based on discussion during the meeting it was made clear that *St George Connect* has no intentions of directing the conversation of land use towards conservation and is instead interested in getting the ball rolling for what is possible, and getting as many of the Town of Saint George's residents' ideas for the land to be heard. There are many financial opportunities available at the moment that can assist the Town in gathering this information and then bringing the ideas to fruition.

Chantal Beliveau stated that she would work with April at the Town hall and using VT Parcel ID (per Abel Russ' suggestion) to get a display together showing the town lands that and that will invite the community to share their ideas and wishes for the lands use.

8:00 – 8:15 Discuss DRB request for updated wording in the '*Town of Saint George Land Use Regulations*'. (To be discussed, proposed and presented to the select board for approval)

Chantal Beliveau noted that there were still some definitions and other areas of the '*Town of Saint George Land Use Regulations*' that the development review board asked the planning commission to revise in order to provide more clarity in some areas of setbacks etc. The board had discussed it previously and were not clear on what sections of the rules the DRB would like to have clarified and how to best proceed. Chantal Beliveau (who is also a member of the DRB) suggested that the subject be discussed again at the next DRB meeting so that clear direction can be given for the requested edits to the Town regulations- so that the Planning Board can then present the changes to the Select Board. Due to the complicated system for making this change to the Town Rules Chantal Beliveau suggested we make sure we catch as many as possible in this one request.

Sarah Tischler noted that the *Saint George Town Plan* adopted February 15th, 2018 is due to be updated every 5 years. As a board we should discuss what is involved with this effort at our next meeting and begin the process.

8:15 pm Adjourned