

I. Call to Order

Members Present: John Baker, Vice Chair; Brian Colombini; Ruby Tetrack; Trevor Thomas; James Paradissis

City Staff Present: Ravi Venkataraman, Director of City Planning

Guests Present: Thomas Renner, Mayor; Bryn Oakleaf; Eli Ogilvie

Call to Order by: John

Meeting Start Time: 6:31 pm

Minutes Recorded by: Ravi

II. Changes to the Agenda

None

III. Public Comment

None

IV. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion by: Ruby

Second: Brian

Decision: Unanimous. Motion carried

V. Discussion: Winoski Comprehensive Plan – The draft Economic Vitality section

Ravi gave an overview of the section and the materials provided. Brian asked about the term “economic vitality” and recommended a more accessible term. Ravi said that other municipal plans refer to this section as “economic development” or “economy”. John and Brian agreed on the term “economy” and keeping the introductory text on the section. Ruby asked about how the interconnections between the economy section and the other sections will be explained. Ravi said that the Safe, Healthy and Connected People Commission suggested a diagram showing the interconnections between the sections, and that he can add text that explains the connections between sections in the beginning of the Comprehensive Plan text.

Ravi reviewed the key issues subsection. Trevor said he appreciated the listing of a grocery store in the first bullet point and asked how the Planning Commission can work to advance this issue. Ravi said that further conversations may be needed if and when someone looks to open a grocery store in the City. Brian highlighted the mention of wayfinding in the 2019 plan which is still needed today, and the need for more accessible information about businesses and services in town, including bus service to Shaws in Colchester. Ravi said that the City had worked on wayfinding in 2019, that the work had petered out, and that further conversations with City

Council are needed on the subject.

Ravi reviewed the draft goals and actions. Trevor underscored the need for consistency with the usage of terms. Trevor said that economic diversification should be added. The commission discussed the usage of the term “evaluate” and concluded to remove “evaluate” from objective #4 regarding vacant properties. John suggested more language on community spaces and parks. Ravi said another objective could be added on this to speak to establishing a sense of place.

Ravi reviewed the statistics included in this draft. Brian asked about data on informal labor in Winooski. Ravi said that he doesn't have any granular data on Winooski that is also accurate. John asked if the goals should include getting more granular data on Winooski's demographics. Brian suggested that this may be under the possible economic development director's purview, and that to get more specific data would require more staff capacity. Eli suggested including data from similarly sized municipalities in Vermont as reference points. Ravi said that he has seen other municipal plans compare local option tax revenue across different municipalities, and said that could be included. John suggested including a comparison of municipalities based on a per capita number of establishments.

John asked about representation in the feedback received for the comprehensive plan so far. Ravi said that outreach is still ongoing, and that he is being mindful of projects the City has done in the recent past and is currently doing to make sure he isn't asking the same questions to the community.

VI. Discussion: Section 248a Notice – 31 East Spring St

Ravi gave an overview of the proposed project. Ravi said that this is a required notification to the Planning Commission and that if the Planning Commission has any comments, they can provide comments to the state Public Utility Commission directly. Ravi said that the Local Resources Advisory Board was given the opportunity to comment before the application was submitted to the state Public Utility Commission. Ravi said that the building already has a cell tower and that this proposal would add another tower next to the existing one. John said that the elevation drawings appear skewed.

VII. City Updates

A. Updates from the Mayor

Thomas reviewed discussions from the previous City Council meeting, which included the tax the rich campaign, and the City budget.

B. Updates from the Inclusion and Belonging Commission

None

C. Updates from City Staff

Ravi said that Champlain Housing Trust has withdrawn their Final Subdivision Plan application for the Armory that was warned for the September Development Review Board meeting. Ravi reviewed the upcoming tentative Development Review Board meeting agenda. Ravi said that the number of zoning permit applications have been comparatively down in recent months.

VIII. Other Business

IX. Adjourn

Motion by: Ruby

Second: Trevor

Meeting End Time: 7:30 pm

DRAFT