

**Draft**  
**Brandon Planning Commission Meeting**  
**March 7, 2016**

**Planning Commission Members Present:** Jeff Guevin, Linda Stewart, Marty Feldman

**Planning Commission Members Absent:** Anne Bransfield, Phyllis Aitchison, Frank Bump

**Others present:** Anna Scheck, Doug Bailey, Dave Atherton

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:01PM by Jeff Guevin, Planning Commission Chair.

**Agenda Approval:**

A motion was made by Linda Stewart to approve the agenda as amended. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Discussion of Brandon GLC Solar

Discussion of Sign Ordinance

**Approval of Prior Meeting and Hearing Minutes:**

This item was postponed to the next meeting.

**Old Business:**

*. Brandon GLC Solar*

Jeff Guevin reported the Planning Commission received a letter from the Rutland Regional Planning Commission that indicates the Brandon GLC Solar project will have a significant regional impact based on the cumulative impacts of solar electric generation facility infrastructure in the Region, however, they have indicated that they will not be taking any action as the project is in conformance with the Rutland Regional Plan adopted June 16, 2015. Dave Atherton advised that the Town has received the Certificate of Public Goods for this project.

Linda Stewart asked if the McKernon solar project application has been submitted. Dave Atherton reported the Town did party status for this project, but there has been no other information received about this project.

*. Sign Ordinance Discussion*

Doug Bailey and Dave Atherton were present to discuss the Sign Ordinance portion of the Brandon Land Use Ordinance with the Planning Commission. Mr. Bailey noted the Town is trying to encourage economic development and there have been some concerns expressed about signs. Mr. Bailey suggested the ordinance be simplified and streamlined and asked if the Planning Commission could take on this project to make the ordinance friendlier to the businesses. He stated it seems to be difficult for someone to put up a temporary sign and there have been comments received from area businesses. Dave Atherton stated the Town is seeing more businesses off the beaten path and questioned if the off-premise signs are viewed as non-conforming or are they

reviewed for unique situations. Mr. Atherton noted the Town would like to promote businesses and it is thought that there should be some provisions to allow signs indicating where businesses are located. One suggestion made was to install a kiosk that would provide information on where the businesses are located. Mr. Bailey stated the Chamber of Commerce previously had this type of kiosk in town and businesses paid to have their location on it. Jeff Guevin stated there are grants available for signage and noted it is good to have uniformity. Linda Stewart advised the current Sign ordinance includes the items that the state prohibits such as billboards and flashing signs. Requirements were also added that "Open" signs can be lit, but not flashing. Jeff Guevin noted there are going to be changes to the Sign ordinance with regard to the current restrictions on commercial signs. Mr. Atherton stated there has been some economic growth happening and the Town wants to continue to promote businesses, but there are issues with the Sign ordinance for new businesses. Marty Feldman stated it is his understanding that the Sign ordinance used to be too vague and the Planning Commission has tried to clarify the ordinance, but the intent was not to hinder business. Anna Scheck advised the State does not allow any signage on Route 7. Dave Atherton expressed concern that although a landowner may give permission for an off-premise sign, the ordinance precludes this from happening. Mr. Guevin stated the Sign ordinance will be reviewed by the Planning Commission during the rewrite of the Zoning Ordinance to help simplify the regulations. Mr. Guevin stated it is helpful to receive input, but the Planning Commission needs to obtain specifics in order to assist with conformance. Linda Stewart stated the Planning Commission spent a great deal of time in developing the ordinance. Dave Atherton also questioned whether there will be an issue for the businesses that will be required to remove their signs during the Segment 6 Route 7 construction project in conforming to the Sign ordinance. Doug Bailey noted he is confused in reading the ordinance and is concerned with new businesses having difficulty understanding the ordinance. It was noted that the Chamber of Commerce had input in the rewrite of the Sign ordinance. Jeff Guevin stated having a formal place that the businesses could place their signs could be helpful. Mr. Guevin noted he would like to see more simplification in the zoning. Linda Stewart agreed that directional signs are needed and suggested that businesses could put up directional signs now, rather than waiting for the completion of the Route 7 project. Dave Atherton noted Bill Moore has been doing a good job getting businesses to consider Brandon and the Town would like to assist businesses with doing this.

### **. *Zoning Administrator Report***

Anna Scheck reported she has issued several permits. The Town Plan was approved by the Select Board. Information was proved to Planning Commission about the Bennington Solar Project that was rejected. It was questioned if there is an opinion regarding the Mobil DRB application. Anna Scheck has provided the applicant criteria information. Ms. Scheck stated the subdivision will have to take place prior to the hearing; otherwise it would be subject to Act 250 as it would be over an acre. The project has ample wastewater and all fees have been paid. The major concern is that the five signs that are in the application are not in compliance. Due to the project being in the central business district, there are no setback requirements. The project includes a Dunkin Donuts, a convenience station and a car wash. Anna Scheck stated the Town is advertising for a substitute Zoning Administrator for the times when Ms. Scheck is out of town.

### **. *Town Plan Adoption***

The Town Plan has been adopted at the Town level and has now been sent to the Rutland Regional Planning Commission and to the State Agency for approval.

### **. *Brandon-Based Code & Review of BLUO***

Jeff Guevin stated the Transect Zones are like the Zoning Districts. They are the base level and can be layered on depending on where they are located in the town. Instead of having a map with 5 or 10 districts, it will start

with the Future Land Use Map and do overlays that would outline zoning for sections that are the same. It was suggested to develop a different word for “Transect” and “Rural Cluster”.

Mr. Guevin stated the T1 – Natural and T2 – Working Lands districts were previously discussed and agreed upon. The discussion continued on the T-3 - Rural Cluster and T-4 – Village districts. Mr. Guevin stated areas that are Rural Cluster districts are like Union Street (past Maple Street going south), Forestbrook, Rydon Acres and Mt. Pleasant Acres. It was suggested to change the name from T-3 - Rural Cluster to T-3 Residential. This area does not include farming or forestry and is a few houses that do not have large amounts of land. Mr. Guevin will add information about planning to the description of T-3. The information will not limit use, but rather describe the type of architecture. The T-4 - Village district is residential but is denser. Instead of the 1 or 2 acre lots that are found in the T-3 Residential district, the lots are around ½ or ¼ acre lots.

T-5 - Downtown district – Anna Scheck stated there was previous discussion of not having housing on the first floors. Housing and retail is allowed on the second floor of the buildings. Ms. Scheck advised that any type of housing requires parking. It is not a state requirement, but it is in the existing zoning that it is required within ¼ mile of the residence. Ms. Scheck noted there will eventually be a parking lot behind the Mobil Station. It was suggested that if there are multiple housing options in the Downtown, the Town could consider a fee for long-term parking. Jeff Guevin suggested diminishing the downtown parking restrictions and include information about parking requirements.

Mr. Guevin noted that going forward; uses will not be the first thing that is looked at. Performance standards will be determined and that will answer many questions on uses.

During the discussion on Public Standards, Jeff Guevin suggested eliminating Section 200(a) that indicates each lot must front on the road. Specifics on these types of lots will be determined. Section 200(c) that indicates a landowner will require approval from the Select Board to develop a lot that will be accessed from a town road or legal trail will be reviewed further at a subsequent meeting. All were in agreement that Items A through F are acceptable. The decision was made to remove Item G that indicates every road has to connect to another road and eliminate Item I as it is already a state requirement and the Town Plan has this information in it. The decision was made to keep the Brandon Land Use Ordinance language from the Performance Standards in place of the current wording for Section 211 – Driveways.

In reviewing the section, General Requirements, Section 220, it was suggested to keep Items A through D, eliminating Item E and changing Item G to read - Every civic space shall have a public access point. Section 230 – Public Frontages will be changed to Municipal Frontages and will remain as written. In all sections it was agreed to remove the wording - unless waived or modified by the DRB to accommodate site specific conditions. A separate Waiver section will be developed.

Tables will also be reviewed at a subsequent meeting.

## **New Business**

### ***. Other Business as Needed***

There was no discussion held.

## **Next Meeting:**

March 21, 2016 @ 7:00PM at the Brandon Library – Regular Meeting

Brandon Planning Commission Meeting

March 7, 2016

**Adjournment:**

A motion was made by Linda Stewart to adjourn the meeting at 9:00PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant  
Recording Secretary