

**Brandon Planning Commission Meeting
January 6, 2020**

Board Members Present: Ethan Nelson, Michael Shank, Bill Mills

Others Present: Jeff Biasuzzi

1. Call to order

Michael Shank, Interim Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:03PM.

2. Agenda Approval

A motion was made by Bill Mills to approve the agenda. **The motion passed unanimously.**

3. Consent Agenda

a. Approve Planning Commission Meeting Minutes – November 4, 2019

A motion was made by Ethan Nelson to approve the Planning Commission minutes of November 4, 2019, as presented. **The motion passed unanimously.**

4. Zoning Administrator Report

Jeff Biasuzzi submitted a written report. Mr. Biasuzzi had provided the Planning Commission members a sample of the letter for the permit notice and noted it will satisfy State statute. There is progress on the sign for Walgreens and they have a month to put up the other one. The Barn Opera project and Kirk Thomas have gone before the DRB for application approvals. The DRB gave approvals at the Town level. The projects are now being reviewed by Act 250 and no one has appealed them. There were two public meetings about the Barn Opera that were well attended. Mr. Biasuzzi advised that Brandon is the only town that has adopted the provision of Act 250 where the Town can volunteer to review impact items 6, 7 and 10. The Town can enter into an agreement with Act 250 with all projects more than one acre going to Act 250 review. Mr. Biasuzzi suggested this discourages development to some extent. Act 250 indicates that 90% of their applications get approved within 90 days, but there can be a high cost. It was noted that the Barn Opera has a good site and is a seasonal business. Michael Shank did not think Act 250 is prohibitive and he sees plenty of new development. Mr. Biasuzzi reported the Zoning Administrator training he attended was interesting and centered around the judicial court system, as opposed to environmental court. This would include tickets from the Police Department and would require certification from the judicial court. At a certain volume of ticket violations, incidents would have to go to environmental court. Mr. Biasuzzi noted there are some notice of violations to clean-up but permit applications have slowed down. Mr. Shank appreciated the training opportunities that Mr. Biasuzzi sends to the Planning Commission members.

There was a question of when the parking lot behind the Mobil Station would be usable. Jeff Biasuzzi had heard the plan is to get the paving completed, with the EV charging stations to be installed from a grant the Town has applied for. There will not be a lot of excavation done with regard to the Dunkin Donuts project as the lines and tanks are already in existence for the gas pumps. Mr. Biasuzzi noted that Aubuchon's will be closing. There is still an issue with the parking area for the building in the back of the building as half is in the floodway and the other usable half is in the flood zone, with the entire property being in the river corridor. The State will not allow armoring of the riverbank, but if the flood plain is not reduced and no fill is introduced, the State may allow the changes. Concrete could be introduced in that area. Mr. Biasuzzi advised another issue is that a retaining wall has been installed in the Town's right of way that may have to be taken down.

5. River Corridors Update

Michael Shank reported Ed Bove will be working on the Town's River Corridor section of the Brandon Land Use Ordinance (BLUO) that should be available for review by the Planning Commission in February. Mr. Shank now has the updated version of the Town Plan and the BLUO.

6. Discussion of 2020 Planning

Michael Shank suggested 2020 Planning Commission activities could include continued update of the Town Plan, now that the Energy Plan is completed, and the River Corridor work is done. Jeff Biasuzzi suggested updating the definitions and revising the accessory structures section, however there are no major changes required. Mr. Biasuzzi stated there are some inconsistencies in the Sign and Accessory Structure ordinances. There was concern noted about feather banners. Mr. Biasuzzi suggested there should be information about this subject in the BLUO for clarification. Bill Mills stated a feather banner was thought to be a temporary banner and should fall under that criteria. Mr. Biasuzzi noted they are difficult to put up and take down, however, they should be taken in at night. Mr. Biasuzzi noted if the information is outlined in the BLUO, the Zoning Administrator can enforce the ordinance. Michael Shank will have a conversation with the DBA concerning signs once the construction is completed. Mr. Biasuzzi also questioned sidewalk café tables and chairs and suggested having a discussion of this subject and potentially setting parameters. Mr. Biasuzzi stated it would be helpful to refine some of these items, but an update of the definitions would also help. Mr. Biasuzzi also suggested possibly including a detailed index.

7. Old/New Business

Ethan Nelson announced he would be stepping down from the Planning Commission and will notify the Select Board. Mr. Nelson will also advise the Select Board about the need for signage concerning trucks at the intersection of Route 7 and Prospect Street. Michael Shank thanked Mr. Nelson for serving on the Planning Commission. Jeff Biasuzzi noted some towns offer a stipend for committee members that helps in having more individuals interested in the positions. It was suggested that it would be good to have discretionary funds for committees for such things as childcare for the committee members to participate in the meetings. Mr. Biasuzzi noted the Town does support the committees with funds for training.

Michael Shank reported the Energy Committee will be launching an EV Festival on July 11th, as Brandon is the birthplace of the EV motor. Bill Moore is on board with the event and Emily Eckert of GMP is involved in the organization of the event. Jeff Biasuzzi suggested the annual Solarfest could be encouraged to move to Brandon.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Next meeting – February 3, 2020 at 6:00PM at the Town Office.

9. Adjournment

The Planning Commission meeting was adjourned by consensus at 7:04PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary