

**Brandon Planning Commission Meeting - Draft  
December 2, 2024**

**Board Members Present:** Jack Schneider, Sara Stevens, Neil Silins, Natalie Steen, Lisa Peluso

**1. Call to order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:02PM by Jack Schneider - Chair.

**2. Agenda Approval**

A motion was made by Neil Silins and seconded by Natalie Steen to approve the agenda. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Add approval of November 4, 2024 Planning Commission meeting minutes.

**3. Approve Meeting Minutes**

**. Brandon Planning Commission Meeting – November 4, 2024**

A motion was made by Natalie Steen and seconded by Lisa Peluso to approve the November 4, 2024 Brandon Planning Commission meeting minutes. **The motion passed unanimously.**

**4. Approve or Amend Minutes from November 20, 2024 Public Hearing on the BLUO**

This agenda item was postponed to a subsequent meeting.

**5. Public Participation and Comment**

There was no discussion held.

**6. Zoning Administrator's Report**

The Zoning Administrator was not in attendance.

**7. Review 2024 Town Report Writeup**

Jack Schneider provided a recap of the 2024 calendar that the Planning Commission accomplished that will appear in the Town Report. In 2023, the Planning Commission had worked on the Town Plan that was completed in January 2024 and approved by the Select Board in February. The Planning Commission began work on the BLUO following the Town Plan approval and on November 20<sup>th</sup>, a draft was sent to the Select Board, who will have a hearing on the BLUO revision on December 16<sup>th</sup>. The Planning Commission also reviewed a couple of solar developer projects this year. SolarFest has received a Certificate of Public Goods for a project and Novice Energy is still awaiting it's certificate. The 2.2-megawatt project on Champlain Street is nearing completion with several thousand panels that are east-facing and tilt to follow the sun. They are not a true solar tracker but work more effectively than fixed panels. SolarFest owns the property where the project is being built and they are finishing the inverter connections. The Planning Commission worked with the Select Board and Town Manager to defer the Act 250 repel with Brandon now a 10-acre town like all other towns in Rutland County except one. The previous Zoning Administrator left after 6 years and Larry Stevens is the new Zoning Administrator. Mr. Schneider noted Mr. Stevens needs to use the Planning Commission as a resource for any issues. Mr. Schneider advised Natalie Steen and his term on the Planning Commission will be ending in June.

**8. Discuss 2025 Initiatives**

Jack Schneider stated next year will not be as labor intensive. Mr. Schneider noted he serves as Brandon's rep to the RRPC and is encouraging them to continue to do more things with the Town. The Town received a grant for workforce training and are working with the School Superintendent and Devon Karpak to provide training for OV students. One issue RRPC has is that there is only a certain number of slots at Stafford Technical and not all students from OV can get into Stafford. Neil Silins asked if there are options for non-college bound students at OV. Mr. Schneider noted there is a new welding program at OV. Natalie Steen advised OV does have a program for non-traditional college track students who are not attending Stafford.

Jack Schneider advised there is an opening on the Historic Preservation Committee. One thing the Planning Commission had discussed was having architectural guidelines. The Town has the Brandon Workbook that was created in 1986. Mr. Schneider suggested partnering with the Historic Preservation Committee on revising the Workbook for things like parking and signage that could be updated from recent work that has been done. Lisa Peluso asked if the Parking Committee has made any progress. Mr. Schneider noted there is also a Traffic Committee that has been meeting. Mr. Schneider stated there is also a Tree section in the Brandon Workbook. Neil Silins advised he took some information from the Workbook for a commonsense approach to how to use a tree in Town. Mr. Schneider stated from a prior refresh of the Workbook, there was a \$6,000 grant and the Town hired an architectural firm to do an updating on it. For anyone who would want to volunteer to be on that committee, they could reach out to the Town Manager. Mr. Silins asked if the Workbook should fall under the Historic Preservation Committee and it was noted that the Planning Commission could assist in updating the Workbook. Mr. Schneider stated there was a lot of recommendations in the Workbook regarding new buildings. Mr. Silins stated the Workbook should go hand-in-hand with the BLUO. Natalie Steen suggested the revision could have some stronger language and refer to it.

Jack Schneider stated there was prior discussion of reviewing the zoning fee schedule and doing a price comparison to see if the fees are comparable to the adjacent towns. If this is something the Planning Commission can provide input on, it could be added to the list of possible projects for 2025. The fee schedule was last revised in 2021. It was suggested that Logan Solomon could potentially help with this project.

Jack Schneider stated many of the planning commissions in the State have a five-year capital plan that is permitted by the State. Mr. Schneider suggested there has been discussion of building a new municipal garage and there are other projects that the Town Manager is keeping track of, like sidewalks and sewer that are also in the works. Neil Silins stated there was also discussion in the budget meeting about capital improvements. If the Town had a financial plan, crisis management could be avoided. Natalie Steen stated a capital plan involves projects, as well as finances and noted there are State templates available. Neil Silins stated HUD has the most complicated, but complete spreadsheets. The VLCT may also have a template. Mr. Schneider stated this is not something that has to be done by the Planning Commission but the Commission could work with the Town Manager on. As part of the capital plan, equipment and vehicles should have a replacement schedule. Ms. Steen noted a capital budget is a piece of a capital improvement plan that includes goals, projections, statistics, and the budget is within that plan. The Town does a one-year capital budget and the Planning Commission could potentially do a five-year plan. Mr. Silins noted that Mr. Hopkins has indicated he will be getting an inventory of everything the Town owns. Mr. Schneider will speak with the Town Manager to see if he needs any assistance with the planning. Ms. Steen suggested also asking Logan Solomon about what other towns do with budgets.

Natalie Steen suggested the Planning Commission work on creating a Historic Overlay District. Mr. Schneider suggested the Planning Commission members review the documents in the Historic Preservation Committee section of the Town's website.

## **9. Other Business**

There was no other business discussed.

## **10. Date of Next Meeting**

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Monday, February 3, 2025 - 6:00PM – Brandon Town Hall

### **11. Adjournment**

A motion was made by Natalie Steen and seconded by Sara Stevens to adjourn the meeting at 6:28PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant  
Recording Secretary