Not Approved

**Minutes**

**MONT VERNON PLANNING BOARD**

**Public Meeting**

**December 12, 2023**

**Present: Jim Bird, Chair, Steve Bennett, Vice Chair, Jay Goodell, regular member, John Quinlan, Selectmen’s Rep, DPW Director Ben Crosby, Strategic Advisory Committee Members Pim Grondstra, Stephanie Apple and Chris Blunt, Community Members Mike Fimbel, Jane King, Bonnie Angulas, Jay Wilson, Steve O’Keefe**

Absent: Brittany Soboliev, Michael Antonucci, Christina Johantgen, Garth Witty

**7:00 pm: Bird** calls the meeting to order.

**7:00 pm: Public Time:** Zachary Zakos of unaddressed map 2 lot 52 on Caesars Rd. (old 2nd NH Turnpike) comes before the board to inquire how to obtain temporary access to his lot to clear some woods for development. The Board must hear the case and make a recommendation to the Selectmen to issue a waiver. **Bird** states that the applicant will probably has to get something from Amherst as well, since access to the Mont Vernon portion of the road begins in Amherst.

**7:15 pm: Floodplain Management Regulation Public Hearing:**

Meeting opened at 7:15pm. The Board reviews proposed changes to the Floodplain Management Regulation supplied by the Office of Planning and Development Department of Business and Economic Affairs. These changes are required based on their review of our existing regulation. **Goodell** presents the current flood plains in Mont Vernon, which are nearly nonexistent. Most of Mont Vernon is labeled as “Area of Minimal Flood Hazard”. FEMA’s 2009 report states that they did not do a study of Mont Vernon. Essentially, the changes are to the wording, changing from “100-year flood” to “Base Flood Elevation”. Other changes are required to be made to other ordinances which were not provided by the OPD, **Bennett** asks that they be added to a meeting agenda. **Schwarz** states they will be added to the second January meeting agenda as a work session.

**Bennett motions to adopt the proposed amendments to the Mont Vernon Zoning Ordinances regarding Flood Plain Management as provided by the OPD and further to request that the Selectmen create a warrant article for the Town’s acceptance of these required changes, second by Goodell, no further discussion, all in favor, motion passed.**

Hearing closed at 7:40pm

**7:40 pm: Review of San-Ken Plan Set:** The Board reviews the provided plan set and mylar and determines they do not want to sign them as they are significantly different than what was expected.

**7:50 pm: Strategic Advisory Committee CIP presentation and approval**: The Board reviews the Capital Improvement Plan as produced by the Strategic Advisory Committee. **Bird** thanks the Committee for their work. Mont Vernon is very behind in its funding. Numbers on this plan are designed to change and items in the timeline are planned to move as funding comes in. **Fimbel** asks if the cemetery road will be built to the same condition past the library as it is planned up to the library. **Quinlan** states that the initial phase will only bring it to the front gate, once the cemetery starts making improvements to the property it will be developed further. **Apple** makes the point that there is a concern about requiring several warrant articles for Capital Reserve Funds. **Angulas** asks if the SAC’s plan is to start all the reserve funds this year and fund them or just start them and **Apple** states that she believes they will ask for some of them to be funded. **Angulas** asks if they are going to be staggered at all or if the ask will be to fund them all at once. **Quinlan** states there needs to be more discussion on that. **Goodell** asks if you can make a broad Capital Reserve Fund and is told no, they need to be very specific. **Angulas** states that this is a lot of money they are asking for and she thinks it may be helpful to start the funds but not fund them as this gets people thinking about them and makes them more prepared to fund them next year. **Grondstra** states that the Capital Reserve strategy is to build back what we are already so far behind. **Angulas** says that she understands that, but if you can’t even get the Town to raise their hand to open those funds? **Grondstra** states that is why the plan is so dynamic, because it moves with all the additions of money based on grants and voting. The level loading plan is intended to not only show where we are lacking but our progress in raising funds. **Angulas** asks if someone could go to the microphone and amend the ask down. **Quinlan** says it can be amended or even rejected. **Grondstra** states that would just delay the funding, but not the spirit of the CIP. **Angulas** asks who is writing all the warrant articles and **Grondstra** says they were planning on the department heads writing their own. **Angulas** asks why the selectmen aren’t writing them, and **Quinlan** states that it is ultimately the Selectmen’s budget, but they prefer for department heads to write their own warrant articles and submit them to the Selectmen. **Goodell** wonders if a SAC representative could speak at Town Meeting in addition to the department heads and explain their thoughts. **Grondstra** states there are plans to hold a public meeting in the MPR in January. **Bird** states the department heads should really make it clear to the public that they agree and committed to this plan. **Quinlan** states that next steps will be approval or disapproval tonight by the Planning Board and then it will go on to the Selectmen to be reviewed and amended as they see fit. **Quinlan** thinks that ultimately it will take a Selectmen presenting the plan to the public at Town Meeting and **Bird** states that hopefully by that time it is a surprise to no one. **Goodell** asks can a capital reserve gain interest and **Quinlan** states yes. **Bird** asks who manages that and **Schwarz** states the Treasurer. **Bird** states he would like the tax impact per thousand to be presented as well. **Bird** asks what the Town’s Operating Budget currently is and is told 3.5 million dollars. **Crosby** asks how often the SAC will meet to update the CIP. **Grondstra** states they were thinking quarterly. **Blunt** states that also there should be no end to planning. These items may be fully funded and off the radar in 10 years, but at that time there will be other needs and they should be continually updating on the plan. Angulas asks if they anticipate the question of bonding these items and **Blunt** states they thought about it, but if they bonded everything, you’re looking at 15 million dollars and at the end of the bonds you have more needs and no money. **Bird** asks how much were owed in tax liens and is told nearly a million dollars. **O’Keefe** discusses a strategy of applying unspent funds to these needs. **Quinlan** states that it is a little difficult for the Town as the selectmen recently paid $900,000 in unspent funds to reduce the tax rate. This year’s rate has gone up $1, and without those unspent funds being applied it would have gone up $3.

**Angulas** asks if this can be printed and passed out at Town Meeting and **Goodell** asks if it could be put in the Town Report. **Schwarz** states it wouldn’t necessarily go in the Town Report, but she did offer a page in the report to the SAC, where they could outline their work this year. She could include something in the Voter’s Guide if the SAC wants to provide something. **Angulas** asks what happens if the Town suddenly goes to SB2 voting, **Goodell** asks if that is expected, and **Quinlan** says no. **Angulas** asks what do you mean you don’t expect it? If it happened how would the Capital Improvement Plan be affected? **Quinlan** says the process would be exactly as it is for the schools. Our budget committees would no longer be advisory, they would set things in stone for the most part, and the people would lose quite a bit of authority over their taxes. Items could not be amended on the floor as they are now – **Angulas** asks if that means the Capital Reserve Funds would end up as a number in the budget and **Quinlan** states yes, they would be established; people don’t realize that with SB2 the public has less control over the budget and their taxes. **Angulas** asks, so you would ultimately make the decisions on which reserves get funded and **Quinlan** says probably.

**Bennett motions to approve the Capital Improvement Plan as presented, seconded by Quinlan, no further discussion, all in favor, motion passed.**

**Bennett motions to thank the Committee for their impressive work, seconded by Quinlan, no further discussion, all in favor, motion passed.**

**Fimbel** asks when the CIP will be available to the public and is told to follow up with the SAC page on the town website.

**8:55 pm: Review of Minutes:** The Board reviews minutes from November 14, 2023, and November 28, 2023.

**Quinlan motions to accept both sets of minutes as amended, seconded by Goodell, no further discussion, all in favor, motion passed.**

**As there is no other business before the Board, Bennett motions to adjourn, second by Goodell.**

Meeting Adjourned 9:05 pm

Next meeting: January 9, 2024

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Schwarz