

Minutes of Belvidere Planning Commission Meeting

April 8, 2021

Meeting convened at 6:01 PM and adjourned at 7:53 PM. This was a remote meeting using ZOOM.

Members present were Deb Baker, Ken Adams Jr., Fran Leavitt, Mary Hysick, Earl Domina, Jr. and Kathy Marchant. Also present was Cathy Mander-Adams, ZOOM meeting host, Monica Przyperhart and Charlie Hancock from Cold Hollow to Canada, Carol Caldwell-Edmonds and Kipp Verner from Lamoille Fibernet.

Motion by Deb to accept the minutes of the March 11, 2021, meeting as written, and request the Town Clerk mark the draft copy on file at the TCO as approved; 2nd by Mary; motion carried and Earl abstained.

Monica and Charlie presented an overview of the Cold Hollow to Canada (CHC) mission and its expanding outreach to the Town of Belvidere:

- CHC works at the "intersection" of people and the forest around them, using Stewardship, Conservation, and Community Involvement / Empowerment
- Stewardship involves offering landowners woodlot management and technical assistance; conservation involves fund procurement to help landowners with the cost of forest preservation; community empowerment involves educating citizens on forest science and the potential benefits of outdoor enjoyment
- CHC positions itself as a networking resource for communities and has also helped develop town plans that address a town's natural resources using techniques such as a community "visioning process"
- Kipp pointed out that in his role on the Fibernet board he is aware of the reliance of maple producers on highspeed internet access for remote monitoring of their maple operations – an example of the "intersection" of people, technology, and forests; the large-scale recycling of obsolete sap tubing, and ridgeline wind and solar farms, as well as cell towers, were discussed as other examples
- Fran disclosed that she is a former member of the CHC board of directors

Carol Caldwell-Edmonds and Kipp Verner reported CUD updates:

- Carol is on the Rural Innovation Strategies committee; Lamoille Fibernet is an official municipality and is looking to partner with an entity such as ValleyNet to provide the "hardware" and support services to the CUD; Belvidere and Waterville are the Phase 1 towns to receive full, high speed service; Vermont Electric Co-op is working to help the farthest outliers connect using a \$2000 grant opportunity; multiple strategies being implemented to maximize the procurement of Federal grant funding distributed under the latest COVID recovery legislation; Governor Scott supports a large portion of this Federal money going to CUD's
- Kipp is on the Partnership Taskforce; his committee is researching potential partners to provide the daily operation and support service of the CUD; each town within the CUD faces unique challenges and the committee is reviewing multiple strategies such as overbuilding fiber optic lines and leasing existing lines to reach every potential user; providers of the fiber optic lines

include MC Fiber, Consolidated Communications, and Comcast; currently a desperate shortage of fiber installers exists, but MC Fiber has the most flexibility to add installers quickly; neighboring CUD's are starting to pool resources such as administrative staff to maximize efficiency and cost savings; CUD bargaining position improves as Federal grant money increases

Other development issues:

- Regarding the possibility of the LNMUUSD deciding to sell the Belvidere Central School building, Kathy Marchant contacted School Director Stephanie Sweet, who encouraged BPC members to attend future School Board meetings to gain information on this subject. Kathy and Fran expressed interest in attending.

Final steps of 2020 Town Plan revision:

- Mary will resend email of cover page photo to BPC members
- There is currently some uncertainty regarding who to contact at LCPC to finalize our plan since Lea's passing
- Next official step is formal review by LCPC on behalf of State of Vermont, followed by completion of the "Municipal Plan Approval Checklist"; other events such as public hearings, notification to interested parties and neighboring towns, public notice lead times will then be determined
- Fran will contact LCPC and forward the completed plan to the appropriate person
- Kathy has the templates for public notices provided by LCPC

Next regular meeting scheduled **May 13, 2021, at 6:00PM**, with likelihood of remote ZOOM meeting.