

Minutes of Belvidere Planning Commission Meeting

September 8, 2022, an in-person and ZOOM hybrid meeting.

Meeting convened at 6:58 PM due to difficulties with ZOOM host sign-in.

BPC members present via ZOOM were Fran Leavitt and Mary Hysick, also present on ZOOM were Val Davis and Jane Campbell from Lamoille Fibernet; Kathy Marchant, Deb Baker, and Ken Adams were BPC members present in person at the Belvidere Town Clerk's Office, along with Belvidere's Fibernet rep Carol Caldwell-Edmonds. No adjustments to agenda.

Motion by Mary to accept the minutes of the August 15, 2022, meeting as written; second by Kathy; motion carried; Fran abstained.

Carol presented an overview of the current situation with Lamoille Fibernet since Google has abandoned negotiations as a potential ISP (a hard copy of Carols' report is included in tonight's minutes):

- If Belvidere remains in CUD, grants are still available to connect "unserved or underserved" residents to high-speed internet
- Several options available despite Google's decision:
 - Connect to existing MC Fiber service; residents in proximity to MC Fiber's lines are considered "served"
 - Divide the town geographically to access service from neighboring CUD's (Jane's comment)
 - Consider other technologies, such as radio pairs to transmit signal from a fiber hookup to a user within a five-mile range - a possible cost-effective approach (Val's comment)
 - Multiple efforts to include Consolidated Communications as a possible ISP provider for Lamoille Fibernet have failed with no responses from Con. Comm. to date (Val's comment)
- Other comments from Val and Jane:
 - Lamoille Fibernet's mission is to "reach the last mile and service people at the end of the road; our CUD is the provider of last resort" (Val)
 - Lamoille Fibernet is forging ahead by building an infrastructure network and talking to multiple ISP sources; connecting Belvidere residents to existing MC Fiber service will not harm unserved residents' chances of gaining high-speed access (Val)
 - Using 5G wireless to connect to high-speed internet is being explored as part of the long-range plan "mix" (Val)
 - Drop costs from existing MC Fiber lines may qualify for future grants (Jane)

ARPA Advisory Committee updates:

- Mary reported that after due diligence, there has been no response to outreach efforts seeking 3 additional at-large committee members; response deadline is Sep. 9th; Ken will inquire if any responses have been left at TCO drop box.
- Consensus is to keep committee number at 7 members, since at-large candidates could volunteer any time, and the 4 BPC members complete a quorum for a 7-member committee.

Under other business:

Ken reported legal work has begun by Brian Monaghan's firm on reclassification of several town roads; posting and notice protocol is in progress for new speed limit ordinances on Smithville and Laraway Mtn. Roads.

Suggestion was offered for the Town's website to include a list of County resources for those in need, with links to those resources.

Alec Jones from LCPC requested to be on next meeting's agenda; future agenda suggestions include Municipal Planning Grant discussion – possible uses to research utilization of existing privately owned tower in Belvidere for cell service, and to begin update on Town Plan.

Motion to adjourn at 8:09 by Deb, second by Kathy; motion carried

Next regular meeting scheduled **October 13, 2022, 6:30PM – 8:00PM**, in person at the Belvidere Town Clerk's Office and will include a ZOOM hybrid opportunity as well.