

Minutes of Belvidere Planning Commission Meeting

November 9, 2023, an in-person and ZOOM hybrid meeting.

Meeting convened at 6:34 PM and adjourned at 7:18 PM.

BPC members Kathy Marchant, Ken Adams Jr., and Stephen Brown attended at the Belvidere Town Clerk's Office via ZOOM; Deb Baker attended by telephone. Ken Adams filled in as ZOOM meeting host. Belvidere resident Fran Leavitt attended also. No adjustments to agenda.

Motion by Kathy to accept the minutes of the September 14, 2023, meeting as written; second by Ken; motion carried.

Presentation by Fran Leavitt on possible Town Forest creation near Belvidere School:

- Land is already owned by the Town
- Fran has gained approval by the Selectboard to research the possible ways to establish a Town Forest, and recently met with the ARPA committee to inform them as well
- Stephen inquired what a Town Forest would mean to the Town and Fran explained that it could encompass a broad spectrum of possibilities including managed forestry, conservation easements, outdoor recreation, or more space for cemetery expansion
- Kathy inquired what liabilities a Town Forest would mean to the Town and Fran explained that in general Vermont statutes offer broad protection in such cases especially if no fees are charged and signs indicate the property is to be used at individuals' own risk
- Fran added that Cold Hollow to Canada has helped towns in the region create town forests, and that grants may be available from Vermont Outdoor Recreation Collaborative (VOREC); Wolcott and Westford are area towns that have recently created Town Forests and may offer advice

ARPA Advisory Committee updates by Kathy:

- The ARPA Advisory Committee is continuing efforts with Lamoille North school administrators to develop a scope for the improvement of children's playscapes and walking paths using ARPA funds
- Kathy asked Stephen as a Belvidere Community Club member if the Club has an interest in a similar approach to improving play areas at the BCC facilities and Stephen felt it could be a goal of the Club, but it is a decision that all BCC members should weigh in on
- Kathy mentioned a concern for a lack of child-care facilities in Belvidere and asked that the subject be an item on the next BPC meeting agenda

Update on Lamoille Fibernet:

- Carol Caldwell-Edmonds announced via email that a Lamoille Fibernet meeting will be held on November 15th at 7:00 PM, to receive comments on Lamoille FiberNet's Annual Report and Proposed Budget
- Kathy received an email from Robbie Blish who works for Mac Mountain. They are willing to meet with Belvidere representatives who may be interested in improving cell coverage in town by using cell phone "repeater towers". They can possibly meet on Friday, November 17th.

Review of BPC procedures and bylaws tabled until next meeting.

Discussion of pertinent town development issues:

- Ken reported that the Selectboard hearing was held to consider reclassification of Basin and Smithville Roads

Other business/public comment:

- Ken reported that using the MERP grant funding, a building audit was performed on the Town Clerk's Office by the Nova Group, and they have submitted a report of their findings
- Ken also reported that a list of possible special projects targeting the use of MTAP funds was compiled by Victoria Helwig from LCPC
- Both subjects listed above require further discussion between LCPC and the Belvidere Selectboard, possibly at the beginning of next year
- Many great comments were offered praising the recent community dinner held at the Belvidere Central School

Motion to adjourn at 7:18 PM by Deb, second by Kathy; motion carried

Next regular meeting scheduled **December 14, 2023, 6:30PM – 8:00PM**, in person at the Belvidere Town Clerk's Office and will include a ZOOM hybrid opportunity as well.