

Town of Starksboro  
Planning Commission meeting  
December 6, 2018  
Unapproved

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**Board members present:** Dennis Casey, Jeff Keeney, Denny Barnard, Dan Nugent, Dan Harris, Norm Cota

**Others present:** Rebecca Elder (ZA), Cecilia Elwert, Jeff Dunham

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The first portion of the meeting was dedicated to the public hearing hosted by the Addison County Regional Planning Commission. The hearing was warned in the Addison Independent and in the local posting locations in Starksboro. The purpose of the hearing was to perform a regional review of the Town Plan as approved by the Selectboard in September.

The hearing and meeting were called to order by Ted Davis, Chair of the ACRPC Local Government Committee. Members of the committee in attendance include: Ellen Kurrelmeyer (Whiting), Andrew Manning (Bridport), Jamie Dayton (Panton), Jim Pulver (Goshen), Shannon Haggett (Vergennes), and Ted Davis (Middlebury).

Regional approval is not mandatory for towns; however it is recommended because it can allow towns to qualify for state and federal funds. The value of regional review and approval also comes with a shared sense of goals and understanding across municipal boundaries. Starksboro's plan has been reviewed by ACRPC staff and volunteer committee members and the plan does meet State standards. The hearing is an opportunity for public comment and for the Local Government committee to vote on a recommendation to the full commission. ACRPC will meet next week.

The committee asked Starksboro PC Chair Dennis Casey to summarize how public input was gathered. He described the various methods used including a survey of the farming community, a public energy forum, and a community-wide survey that was distributed both on paper (via mail) and electronically (Front Porch Forum post with link to an online survey). Starksboro hired longtime planning consultant Brandy Saxton to help the town with the planning process and updating of the Plan.

Starksboro is not seeking "substantial deference" status at this time. Though the PC included a comprehensive Energy Plan in this revision of the complete Town Plan, seeking substantial deference did not seem a feasible goal at this time. Since the plan was written, the Town has formally established an Energy Committee that may have time to prepare for this additional step in the future. Jeff Dunham was present representing the EC and he will take the information back to the group for discussion. ACRPC now has its energy plan approved, so they can now approve towns for substantial deference designation. Nine towns have received grant funds to work on their enhanced energy plans. The last 3 are in the cue now. It is a very drawn out and complicated process. ACRPC gave a lot of comments back to the State about energy planning as Addison County received many of the requests for the large solar farms, especially in the Route 7 corridor. This has presented challenges as well the opportunity to be leading innovators in renewable energy planning for the state. For further details on the process, speak with ACRPC Director Adam Lougee and consider sitting in on the Energy substantial deference meetings to become familiar with the steps for approval. Procedurally, the local Planning Commission is the policy advisor to the Town and it is the Selectboard that would ask for substantial deference status for Starksboro.

Comments from the ACRPC committee:

- Members of the committee enjoyed reading the plan. It is one of the first to talk about climate change, which was appreciated. The activities and actions described were helpful and the town did a great job in identifying and reaching out to the stakeholders.
- Policy 99, p 59 – Village Center designation program. It would be helpful for Starksboro to pursue this designation. Vergennes received the designation and much of the street-scape improvements all came from that. It can help revitalize the village center and bring in funds. If the town wishes to pursue this, RPC is there to help with the process.
- The committee was glad to see the PC had conducted a community survey and it was a good approach to seek responses both online and on paper.
- The group briefly discussed zoning challenges at the town borders and issues that could arise between Starksboro's Agricultural, Scenic, and Rural Residential district along VT Route 116 to the Hinesburg border and the neighboring town's residential and industrial district. There haven't been problems thus far and the towns are aware of the differences in district zoning.

Some questions were asked on behalf of the RPC:

1. Are there any training needs for PC or DRB? RPC wants to know what board members are looking for or what might be needed. Please direct requests or feedback to Adam Lougee.
2. Are there any current zoning issues or regulatory issues that RPC can help with? The PC mentioned they are currently reviewing the bylaws and hope to incorporate language that will address newer home options such as the "Vermod" home (not a mobile home but modular style). Also looking to address zoning issues in mobile home parks: doublewides have been placed in the parks contributing to safety issues, challenging setbacks, and infrastructure is not up to code (water and sewer). The town is trying to figure out what to do and how to be helpful. Addison County Community Trust manages the three MHP in town.
3. Are there planning goals you have in mind to pursue now that the Town Plan is complete? The PC hopes to focus on support and opportunity for kids in the community; planning for the village center growth and possible uses of town-owned land.
4. RPC representation – Rich Warren represents Starksboro at the regional level.

The ACRPC Local Government Committee then voted to recommend the Starksboro Town Plan for approval by the full board at its next meeting.

The hearing was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

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The PC regular meeting resumed at 8:00 pm. Chair Dennis Casey called the meeting to order.

### Energy Committee request re: Electric Vehicle charging station grant application

Jeff Dunham was present representing the Energy Committee. The EC recently put together a grant app for an EV station. The grant is administered using funds from the VW settlement. The application is complete except for signature from the Planning Commission. The Selectboard approved the application.

Jeff described the plan for the EV charging station as proposed. The EC will ensure the road crew is consulted about placement and snow removal concerns. The system has a solid foundation, will have a touch-screen interface, and will be networked. The system would require payment from users and the Town Selectboard sets the payment structure. A 5-yr software program that comes with the unit. The billing is included for 5 years as well. The total cost is in excess of \$20,000 including installation and signage. The grant would cover 90%. The Selectboard approved the 10% match from the town if the grant were to be awarded. Since then, Jeff discovered that Vermont AOT will cover the 10% so there would be no costs outright from the town.

#### Questions/comments from the PC:

- Will there be waiting time for access to the charger? Will people stay with their vehicles while charging?
  - When you plug in, the charging station will tell the user how long until full charge. You can watch the monitoring on your phone with the associated app.
  - EV users can look for the stations on mobile phones and can tell if a station is being used. Some stations even allow users to reserve time.
- Dan Nugent: The EV station grant is a good concept and good use of the funds. However, he thinks it is a bit of a waste of the grant money to place a station in Starksboro. He thinks it would be better if located where people are going to stores and have places to go/do business/shop/eat. In Starksboro, there's nowhere to go other than the library that is only open 2 days a week. In Bristol or Hinesburg, a charging station would make sense because there are activities and destinations for people. There are limited grant funds and the investments should go where people will use EV stations more. Given the amount of money and resources required for installation, the carbon footprint it makes is a waste.
- Jeff Dunham: Research has shown some "range anxiety" that results in people not wanting to buy an electric vehicle because they don't know where they can charge. One goal of the grant is to get a good spread of stations across the state. On Route 116, there are no stations between E. Middlebury and Burlington.
- AOT wants to see the stations in all the commuter Park and Ride lots. If we don't get the grant, the AOT may assist with costs for installation.
- Denny Casey: How does maintenance of the system work?
  - System would be owned by the town; repairs are the responsibility of the town. At the end of the 5-year term, the Town will have covered the obligation to the grant. (The grant mandates 5 years.) Jeff D. was advised that maintenance wouldn't be needed after the 5-year period.
- Does the building have enough service? Yes, 200 amp.
  - Could the power be run from the library building instead of the Town Clerk's office?
  - Jeff thinks the service might be better from the clerk's office.
  - Denny C. stated that it would be nice if the station wasn't in the parking area. He would prefer another set aside, so it could be by itself, perhaps by the commuter shed.
- Denny Barnard: Has an electrician measured the power source? He said there needs to be determination if there is harmonics problem (i.e. fluorescent lights, copiers, etc.) An electrician can measure with an RMS amp meter.
- Would the town need any additional insurance?
  - Liability – Rebecca will ask VLCT if any additional insurance would be needed. Costs charged would need to compensate for this.
- Jeff Dunham said the main goal is to influence behavior and expand coverage.
- [www.driveelectricvt.com/charging-stations/public-charging-map](http://www.driveelectricvt.com/charging-stations/public-charging-map)

Jeff noted that the PC did not pursue "substantial deference" due to the extensive work involved. However, they support the Energy Committee if they wish to pursue the designation for the future. The information was given to Jeff to take back to the Energy Committee.

The board members reviewed the required language for the motion/resolution.

**Motion:** Dan Harris made a motion to authorize the Chair of the Planning Commission to sign the application for a grant to support the installation of an Electric Vehicle charging station. Jeff Keeney second.

**Motion carried.** 5 yes, Norman Cota abstained.

Other topics:

- EC meeting with new representatives Mari Cordes and Caleb Elder at their meeting on 1/7/18.

Review of the previous minutes was postponed until the next meeting on 12/20/18.

**Motion:** Norm Cota made a motion to adjourn at 9:25 p.m. Denny Barnard second.

**Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder  
Zoning Administrator

**Next meeting:** December 20, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.  
Town Clerk's office