

ATHENS TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Notes

December 5, 2023

10:30 am

Attending Members: Andrew Toepfer, John Oberling, Janet Perry, Mark Berman, Ivor Stevens

Absent Members: None

Other Attendees: None

Meeting commenced at 10:30 am at Town Hall

1. Welcome and Introductions

- a. Introduce MB as only new Committee member
- b. Brief discussion (for benefit of MB) of history of presentation of prior plan to Town
 - i. Athens is one of three towns in Windham Regional Commission (“WRC”) without a town plan
 - ii. WRC approved prior plan
 - iii. Prior plan was voted down 44-42
- c. Benefits of having Town Plan include ability to apply for certain grants
 - i. Town Plan is not “zoning” or a precursor to zoning
 - ii. Strong consensus that Town does not want zoning
- d. There are required elements to the plan; WRC helps to ensure that all those elements are included and provides other suggestions

2. Who will serve as Convenor?

- a. AT serves as moderator for this meeting only.
- b. MB to serve as secretary.
- c. Discussion of who should be convenor.
 - i. Decision that Committee will have rotating convenor (AT, JO, JP).
- d. Decision to have “standing agenda.”

3. How often should Committee meet?

- a. First Tuesday of each month, at 10:30 am, at Town Hall
4. Discussion of Standing Agenda items
 - a. Call to order
 - b. Amendments to the agenda
 - c. Approve past minutes
 - d. Three-minute public comments
 - e. Working session (Discuss Town Plan)
 - f. Review members' independent research and work
 - g. Assign new Town Plan topics to members
 - h. Adjourn
5. Public Comment
 - a. No members of public present at today's meeting
6. Discussion of Previous Town Plan Draft
 - a. Discussion of using prior Town Plan draft as basis for new Town Plan proposal
 - b. Agreement that prior plan will need to be updated but can serve as foundation for new plan
7. Timeline for New Proposed Plan
 - a. Goals
 - i. Summer 2024: First public discussion of draft
 - ii. Fall 2024: Proposed Plan is ready for Town vote
 - b. Agreement that it will be up to Selectboard to decide when the proposed Plan is submitted to Town for a vote and whether it will be at a Town Meeting or a Special Meeting
8. Which Non-Committee Contributors to the Plan Need to Be Contacted and How to Do It
 - a. JO recalls who was noticed last time around:
 - i. Windham Regional Comm'n, 139 Main Street, Suite 505, Brattleboro, VT 05301

- ii. Abutting Towns (Brookline, Grafton, Westminster, Rockingham, Townshend)
- iii. DHCD, National Life Building, Drawer 20, Montpelier VT 05620-0501

b. Certified Mail in the past; JP believes that we might be able to serve electronically now

9. Discussion of anticipated expenses/costs

- a. JO has receipts from prior go around; prior printing expense was \$265.00
- b. Discussion of using Vermont Journal (because everyone gets it), in lieu of Brattleboro Reformer, for notice purposes
- c. JO to call WRC to discuss grant with them; coordinating with them their involvement in creating this proposed Plan (charts, tables, etc.)

10. Other Business

- a. For next meeting: Members to review prior Plan up to “Public Health”

11. Adjourn (at 11:40 am)

Mark A. Berman, Secretary