

Planning Board – Regular Meeting

Zoom Virtual Platform – www.zoom.us, P: 646-558-8656, Meeting ID: 823 8501 8561, Password: 731544

Wednesday January 5th, 2022 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Donald Holland, Chair; Walter Gunn, Clerk; Cheryl Thibodeau, Bruce Colton, Chris Legiadre.

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Assist. TM Corrin Meise-Munns, Dave Marinelli.

The *Planning Board Virtual Regular Meeting* was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chair Donald Holland.

Discussion – Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grant with Assit. TM Corrin Meise-Munns:

The Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program, created by the state’s Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EOEAA) approximately five years ago, aims to provide financial and technical assistance to municipalities as they address the impacts of climate change. As part of this program, municipalities can earn an MVP certification (a requisite is the completion of an 8-hour workshop) and be eligible for MVP grants of up to \$2,000,000 to address the issues that said municipalities have identified in their MVP Summary of Findings document. Additionally, a Hazard Mitigation Plan is a document also prepared by a team of town boards and departments that looks back at historical events in Longmeadow in order to identify trends, with such data becoming critical to strategic mitigation planning.

Longmeadow achieved MVP certification in 2019 and has applied for three action grants since then, but has not received any awards to date. In conversations with MVP Regional Coordinator Andrew Smith, both Corrin Meise-Munns and Lyn Simmons have concluded that the town could benefit from a more robust and competitive municipal profile. While the town is not as competitive as other municipalities in regards to certain demographics or the demonstration of a robust public engagement of environmental justice populations and climate-vulnerable populations, municipalities with comparable demographic characteristics have received some action grants; with its Hazard Mitigation Plans and MVP Summary of Findings documents considered outdated, working to update them seems as a sensible step that can increase Longmeadow’s profile as well as provide additional benefits. Such step is a precursor to the Town Manager’s Office’s ultimate goal: consider the benefits of applying for an MVP Action Grant that would fund three objectives:

- a) Update the nearly obsolete 2004 Long Range Plan/Master Plan and include language pertaining to climate change resilience.
- b) Hire a consultant to develop a regulatory analysis of all bylaws and regulations related to development, redevelopment and land use to highlight any lack of language related to climate change resilience and how/where to incorporate it.
- c) Review the town’s existing capital improvement planning process to incorporate climate mitigation and adaptation criteria for municipal funding, if applicable.

Some key items were discussed:

- a) Both Longmeadow’s Long Range Plan at the time, and more recently, East Longmeadow’s experience with updating their Plan have require extensive community involvement. Having an updated Long Range Plan that reflects the town’s commitment to climate resiliency may open the door to funding opportunities as long as the proposed activity for which funding is being sought is reflected in such a plan.
- b) The action grant in question requires the municipality to provide a 25% match of the total cost of the Plan’s updating project. Finance Director Jennifer Leydon is already working with town departments to reduce their budgets by less than 1% approximately as part of the town’s new fiscal year budget preparations but such adjustments may not be enough. That said, in-kind labor is an eligible form of providing the match. Research on town budget impacts will be conducted prior to applying for the action grant.
- c) This year the MVP Action Grants are requesting an initial step of filing a Letter of Intent by January 21st, which would allow MVP regional coordinators and municipalities to work closer together on the formal submission of the grant later in the year. The Planning Board, as the public body with legal authority to review and adopt Master Plans under M.G.L., must vote to endorse such Letter of Intent.

In light of the town’s aging Long Range Plan and how its upgrade would benefit the community in various aspects, Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Bruce Colton, to commit the board to assist the Town Manager’s office in any efforts related to the updating of the Long Range Plan. Roll call vote – Mr. Holland: yes; Mr. Gunn: yes; Mr. Colton: yes, Ms. Thibodeau: yes; Mr. Legiadre: yes.

Visitor Comments:

Dave Marinelli noted that the town's Housing Plan is over ten years old and was wondering if the Town Manager's office will include this in the Master Plan

Meeting Minutes Review:

1. Regular Meeting December 1st, 2021: Walter Gunn made a motion, which was seconded by Chris Legiadre, to accept the minutes as presented. Roll call vote – Mr. Holland: yes; Mr. Gunn: yes; Mr. Colton: yes; Ms. Thibodeau: yes; Mr. Legiadre: yes. All in favor 5-0, motion passed.
2. Special Joint Meeting with Zoning Board of Appeals: November 17th, 2021: Walter Gunn made a motion, which was seconded by Chris Legiadre, to accept the minutes as presented. Roll call vote – Mr. Holland: yes; Mr. Gunn: yes; Mr. Colton: abstained; Ms. Thibodeau: yes; Mr. Legiadre: yes. Four in favor 4-0 with one abstention (Bruce Colton), motion passed.

Planning Board Comments:

The Longmeadow Shops is in the process of being acquired by a new management firm. The Planning Board has worked with current facility manager Steve Walker throughout the years, and looks forward to a continued collaborative relationship with the new owners.

Walter Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Cheryl Thibodeau, to adjourn the meeting. Roll call vote – Mr. Holland: yes; Mr. Gunn: yes; Mr. Colton: yes; Ms. Thibodeau: yes; Mr. Legiadre: yes. All in favor 5-0, motion passed and meeting was adjourned at 7:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Bianca Damiano