

Approved As Amended 4-4-12
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
March 21, 2012
7:30 PM
Jamestown Town Hall
93 Narragansett Ave.

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. and the following members were present:

Michael Swistak - Chair	Duncan Pendlebury – Vice Chair
Rosemary Enright - Secretary	Richard Lynn
Michael Jacquard	Michael Smith

Also present:

Lisa Bryer, AICP – Town Planner
Cynthia Reppe – Planning Assistant
John McCauley – Executive Director Jamestown Chamber of Commerce

I. Approval of Minutes March 7, 2012

A motion was made by Commissioner Enright and seconded by Commissioner Smith to accept the minutes as written. So unanimously voted.

II. Correspondence – nothing at this time

III. Citizen's Non Agenda Item – Nothing at this time

IV. Reports

1. Town Planner's Report – Two High Ground water applications will be on agenda for the meeting on April 18th. I will be at the Planning Conference and away that week so Justin Jobin will be here for the meeting. The Wind Turbine application should be on the agenda for our first meeting in April if not possibly the 1st meeting in May. Commissioner Swistak asked if we will look at the entire project; **Lisa Bryer** she thinks the Planning Commissions input will be limited in scope. It has not been defined yet but may include a recommendation to zoning.
2. Chairpersons report
3. Town Committees
 - a. Harbor
 - b. Buildings and Facilities – met tonight and working on report
 - c. Affordable Housing Committee
 - d. North Rd. Bike Path Committee
4. Sub Committees

V. Old Business

1. **Jamestown's Economy: A Small Town Economic Development Plan and Strategy including Cultural, Historical and Creative Economies - Discussion of Upcoming Plan**

Town Planner Lisa Bryer went through the plan and asked the Planning Commission for their input. Commissioner Smith says this document presents a conclusion and that is that we support creative and cultural economies. The Planner noted that in order to support those sectors we have to define what they are and what they mean to Jamestown. This is where the plan and the consultant will come into plan. Smith thinks that the consultant will be an advocate of economic development. Too much focus on Cultural Historical and the Arts in his opinion.

The question is, are we happy with what we have now as far as economic development and the economy of Jamestown.

Commissioner Enright does not think this is a balanced approach just looking at the first 3 pages. Commissioner Enright said the early part of the document is heavy on cultural. The Planner agreed and noted that there is much information available on the creative economies from the New England Foundation for the Arts. She will try to find more information on Cultural and other aspects of Jamestown's economy

Commissioner Pendlebury says if you look at Providence they are heavy on cultural for their economic development.

Ms. Bryer was asked if the chamber is going to fund part of the consultants fee's. No she said, as of now, the town will. They will be a part of the steering committee and they can certainly contribute funding if they wish.

A discussion ensued with regards to the time frame and steering committee. Ms. Bryer is looking at a 6 month time frame. The steering committee will be made up of the Planning Commission, Chamber of Commerce, Art Community, Home Based Businesses and residents. They will then develop what we have as our resources and what the elements are. This will be a separate document from the comp plan but can be incorporated at a later date.

A discussion ensued with regards to when an RFP will go out and how much time is the Planning Commission willing to spend on this. This document will be amended and then will be ready to go out to bid.

John McCauley the new Executive Director of the Jamestown Chamber said he is attending this meeting as a private citizen and will discuss this at the next Chamber meeting. A lot can be done to help the businesses.

Commissioner Pendlebury said it seems to him this is a first step. Why do we need one for a town like Jamestown? Should Town Administrator Bruce Keiser come to a meeting? Do we want to increase our tax base from non-residential? Why should we encourage this? Should we be thinking about the build out of commercial on the Island? The Planner will talk to Mr. Keiser about this. Possibly have him attend the next meeting and discuss this issue.

Commissioner Lynn recommended that Ms. Bryer get in touch with Anne Marie Lubenau, **Executive Director of the Rudy Bruner Award For Urban Design, A Loeb Fellow at Harvard.**

She recently facilitated a meeting of the new group Scenic Aquidneck Island. ~~who is the Executive Director of Urban Design. She is working in Newport right now and~~ Commissioner Lynn knows her and will give Ms. Bryer her number.

Commissioner Swistak said maybe Jamestown is just fine the way it is, maybe we don't need to mess with anything. Commissioner Jacquard says if you ask the businesses in town they would disagree. The Planner noted that we have mostly essential businesses here in town. All the things we need for a small town are here and are they all hanging on a thread? It would be sad to lose any of these services. These are some things that we will learn from this process.

Sav Rebecchi **speaking as a resident** said he is concerned that based on the info we have that we have dropped 8% of our population and our buildout is lower, the declines are serious in his opinion. The businesses depend on seasonal customers. **Lisa Bryer said** according to the tax assessor 27% of our tax bills are sent off island. We are turning back into more of a seasonal town.

The planner has enough to work with at this point to move forward.

VI. New Business – nothing at this time

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Enright at 8:21 p.m.

Attest:


Cynthia L Reppe
Planning Assistant

This meeting was digitally recorded