

Approved January 27, 2023

CORNWALL PLANNING COMMISSION (CPC)

Public Hearing and Regular Meeting
Cornwall Town Hall and via Teleconference
December 20, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: Don Burns, Mickey Heinecken, Katherine Branch, Chet Van Dellen, Conor Stinson, Lauren Ringey

Recording announced.

CALL TO ORDER - the meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by the Meeting Chair, Mickey Heinecken.

QUORUM - established

AGENDA - Katherine B. MOVED / Conor S SECONDED a motion to approve the agenda as presented. *Motion passed* - 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

MINUTES

November 15, 2023 - Don B. MOVED / Katherine B. SECONDED a motion to approve the minutes as amended, with the addition of Tanya Byker as among those present and one typo corrected. *Motion passed* - 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS - none

PUBLIC COMMENTS - none

NEW BUSINESS

• **Chet/ Mickey report on housing meeting, discuss recommendations for agenda**

The kick-off meeting for the housing working group has been scheduled for January 11, 2024. After a long discussion on the right name for this group, Conor advised that “working group” is the most appropriate. At a later date, if the working group develops to the point where they want to do what the Statute allows more formal housing groups to do, and the Select Board approves, they could formalize as a housing commission.

Chet V.D. and Mickey H. discussed with the other CPC members the meeting agenda, the logistics, and goals. The meeting will be held on Zoom and will be recorded. As it is a working group meeting, written minutes are not required. The meeting will be warned, with written notices posted in the required locations, and also on Front Porch Forum and to Sue Johnson’s town email list.

Chet and Mickey reported that there are 10 interested people who have been invited to the January 11 meeting. Katherine advised to provide the housing document she drafted for participants to read before the meeting, and to also have them read the housing section of the Town Plan. Chet and Mickey will facilitate the first meeting. At a subsequent meeting, once the group gets going, nominations for a chair or co-chairs (not Chet or Mickey) will be on the agenda.

Conor said he is willing to help with Zoom logistics at this first meeting.

- **Petition reminder for January; members up for election**

Mickey and Chet's appointed terms are up. To run for election to the CPC, they need to submit a petition with required number of signatures by the deadline in January.

CORRESPONDENCE REVIEW - none

OLD BUSINESS

- **Conor S. - update on statutory requirements for sub-committees** - see report on housing meeting, above.

- **Vote/sign letter of support for CORA - drafted by Don B.**

After discussion, Katherine B. MOVED / Mickey H. SECONDED a motion to approve the following letter of support of CORA drafted by Don B. and to notify the CORA committee, the Select Board and the Town Clerk, and to send it to the CORA Committee, the Select Board and the Town Clerk. **Motion passed** - 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

Memorandum

Date: December 20, 2023

The Cornwall Planning Commission (CPC) supports the Cornwall Outdoor Recreation Area (CORA) concept as presented to the CPC by members of the CORA committee at the October 18 CPC meeting. The concept is consistent with the recently approved and updated Cornwall Town Plan. The CORA project also is an excellent example of a revitalization effort supported by the State's Village Center Designation Program that the Town of Cornwall recently applied for and was awarded. The CPC believes that the CORA concept has the potential of being a legacy project that will strengthen residents' sense of community, encourage social interaction among Town residents, and promote community activities by providing an engaging public space for the future.

Below are excerpts from the Cornwall Town Plan that support the CPC's position. The relevant portions are indicated in bold-face italic type.

Page 65: Cornwall Today - Recreation - Analysis

A large amount of open space still exists around the Town Hall and the school, but is privately owned. Some of this privately-owned land is already used for recreational purposes, such as the firemen's ball field which was constructed in the 1980s. If the Town could eventually purchase the land, it could extend the existing recreational facilities at the school, creating additional playing fields and trails for walking, biking and cross-country skiing. There is a lot of support for recreational trails, sports fields, and public green space in the village center.

Page 110: Cornwall Tomorrow - 2004 Vision Statement

Among the weaknesses identified are affordability, the growing potential for loss of rural character, and lack of a focal point for community activities that would be afforded by a more robust village center.

Page 113: Cornwall Tomorrow - Future Land Use - Cornwall Village Center Area

Public: The majority of the town's public buildings and services will continue to be

based within the village area. These places, along with the Cornwall Congregational Church and Town Green, provide a civic hub for Cornwall residents. The Town intends to preserve the Town Green for its current function as a cultural and recreational resource and will maintain the green as a public investment. The Town will seek opportunities to enhance or promote the function of the Town Green as an open space intended for community members and travelers' use. Plans that create a stronger sense of place in the Cornwall village and that provide safe links (such as crosswalks, signage or other appropriate traffic calming measures) to the community resources located there will be encouraged.

*Page 121: Cornwall Tomorrow - Plan Goals and Recommendations - Population
Goal 1: Promote community activities and interaction among town residents through the following actions.*

Goal 2

- a. Create and maintain public facilities and spaces that encourage social interaction among town residents.*
- b. Strengthen residents' sense of community by promoting opportunities for residents to gather for recreation, education and other activities.*

Page 127: Cornwall Tomorrow - Plan Goals and Recommendations – Recreation

Goal 1: Promote provision of public recreation facilities, preservation of public access and responsible use of the town's resources through the following actions.

- b. Support the recreation committee's efforts to improve and promote public access to public and private lands, and to connect District teachers with private landowners wishing to provide outdoor education opportunities.*
- c. Identify existing and potential bike and pedestrian networks and recreation opportunities throughout Cornwall.*

Page 132 – Cornwall Tomorrow - Plan Implementation – Reinforce our historic settlement and-use pattern

Action C3: Investigate Village Center Designation application for Cornwall Village and West Cornwall.

Page 134 – Cornwall Tomorrow - Plan Implementation – Increase local recreation opportunities

Action G1: Identify potential new local recreational opportunities. Support the current activities of the Recreation Committee.

Completion Date: Ongoing

Who: Recreation Committee and Select Board

How: Seek interested persons through the use of the town's newsletter and website to mutually develop a work plan and goals and to work with landowners, when appropriate, to achieve goals.

The Recreation Committee, along with other town groups, can also re-assess the practicality for recreational use of Douglas Pond and the re-establishment of town youth sports teams.

Why: Prior surveys indicated that residents seek increased opportunities to recreate in Cornwall but are challenged by not knowing what is available and what lands are accessible. Of particular interest were: bike shoulders on Routes 74 and 125, possible use of the VAST trail network for summer hiking and horseback riding, trail connectivity into Middlebury, and an inventory of property allowing unhindered access for hunting and fishing. In 2017 there was sufficient interest in town trails to form a Trails Committee, consisting of members from the Conservation Commission, the Recreation Committee and several other interested residents. More recently, the Select Board has identified the creation of multi-use trails as one idea in several to receive American Rescue Plan Act funding.

- **Don B. - Energy Committee update** - Don reported that the Weybridge Energy Committee has agreed to mentor Cornwall in forming an energy committee for a year, and then assess any future collaboration after that. Gary Barnett plans on having a table at Town Meeting with information and the opportunity to sign up.
- **Don B. - address Town Plan action items** - Don B. spoke in support of a regular review of the Town Plan action items to assess the status of each item. All agreed to add this to the agenda as a standing item.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Board discussed which town groups they have met with in the last few months (the Conservation Commission, the Select Board, CORA, and the Energy Coordinator) and which groups or individual officers they should meet with in the next few months (the Development Review Board {DRB}, the Listers, the Road Commissioner, and the Emergency Manager).

ACTION ITEMS

1. Meeting Chair for the January 17, 2024 meeting is Lauren Ringey.
2. All CPC members review the implementation section of the Town Plan
3. Add review of Town Plan action items to agenda for the January meeting.
4. Include the action items from the minutes of each meeting into the agenda of the next meeting.
5. Send the agenda out 10 days before each meeting.
6. Katherine volunteered to write something for the newsletter - deadline December 22.
7. Chet and Conor plan on attending the January 3 DRB meeting to discuss Act 47.
8. Extend another invitation to the DRB to meeting with the CPC, February 7 perhaps?
9. Ask the Town Attorney to review Act 47.
10. Draft a memo to inform citizens about Act 47, which is now the law of the land that supersedes Cornwall regulations. Cornwall regulations will not be changed to comply with Act 47 until a full review of Town regulations is done.
11. Conor S. offered to help with Zoom at the first housing working group meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Conor S. MOVED / Lauren R. SECONDED a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Motion passed** - 6 in favor, 0 opposed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 pm.

Submitted by Sharon Tierra, Secretary of the CPC