

CITY OF VERGENNES VERMONT  
REGULAR MEETING of the CITY COUNCIL  
May 24, 2022  
Meeting Held In-Person & via Zoom

- Mayor Mathew Chabot
- Alderman Dickie Austin
- Alderman Mel Hawley
- Alderwoman Jill Murray-Killon
- Alderwoman Zoe Kaslow (Zoom)
- Alderman Ian Huizenga
- Alderwoman Susan Rakowski
- City Manager Ron Redmond
- Britney Aube, City Clerk

**1. Microphone Check**

**2. Call to Order.** Mayor Mathew Chabot called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

**4. Amendments to Agenda**

- Alderman Austin requested the review and approval the Pear Ridge Production liquor license be added as an agenda item. This item was moved to the top of the agenda.

-Alderman Hawley questioned the process for revising and approving the proposed zoning regulations. Alderman Hawley stated that he believed the City Council should hold a workshop to review the substantive and non-substantive to the Zoning changes as was suggested at the last meeting. He objected to items 7.f and 7.g having single stars. Alderman Hawley asked to go on record as rejecting the zoning review process.

- Mayor Chabot said given the short list of non-substantive issues, he believed the matter could be addressed at the regularly scheduled meeting. He stated that he did say at the 5/10/22 City Council meeting that non-substantive issues would be addressed in a special meeting. Upon review of the short list of non-substantive issues, he said he chose to address the non-substantive issues at the city council versus holding a special meeting.

- Alderman Austin proposed an amendment to item 7.g:

*The City Council discussion on proposed amendments to the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations as amended for non-substantive changes from item 7.f, with two stars (possible decision) Rakowski seconded.*

Agenda, with modifications, was approved unanimously.

**5. Visitors** None.

6. **Approval of 5/10/22 minutes approved unanimously approved. Warrant for 5/24/22 approved unanimously.**

7. **Business**

a. **Liquor License for Pear Ridge Productions.** To rent the basement of Hired Hand, 35 Green Street, as a commercial kitchen solely for the purposes of a catering business. No service of liquor. Approved unanimously.

b. **Request for Approval of License to Operate a Taxi for Joseph Baker, Ferrisburgh\***

Requested insurance information by council at 5/10/22 meeting for Joseph Baker was provided by his employer, Ricky Loyer, Vergennes Taxi. Staff received background check from VPD. Mr. Loyer explained that for future reference, his insurance policy covers all of his drivers versus identifying specific drivers. Approved unanimously.

c. **Request to use City Green for the 2022 Vergennes Farmers Market.** Christopher Reck. Discussed how Farmers Market will work to mitigate impact on City Green grass. Approved unanimously.

d. **Request from the Vergennes Partnership to close off So. Maple Street** (between Main Street and the alley) for the 2022 Summer Sidewalk & Street Sale, during the hours of the sale only on both Saturday July 16 and Sunday, July 17, 2022\* Approved unanimously.

e. **Review of WWTF Project Update \*\*\* City Manager Redmond and Jenny Auster, Hoyle Tanner project manager, presented an update on the Sewer and Collection System upgrade.** Updated project cost analysis showed a projected increase versus what was presented to voters prior to the March 1 bond vote due to unprecedented inflationary increases.

Auster explained that following the March 1 bond vote was approved, the City received feedback from the State of Vermont DEC on the City's Long Term Control Plan, and asked that the City include to move three sewer segments from the 6-10 year completion period to the 0-5 year completion period. That in turn increased the total projected cost of the project from \$25.5 million to \$28.9 million. The cost of these 3 sewer segments was rolled into the USDA funding package.

Auster reviewed project funding to date: USDA – \$7 million grant; Army Corps grant is a percentage (versus a dollar amount) so that will be helpful if inflation continues to increase; Clean Water SRF or CWSRF is a subsidy provide by the State of Vermont that helps with covering a portion of our engineering services. \$6 million to help pay for the cost of the Macdonough Pump Station and Force Main ( \$3 million ARPA grant from the State and \$3 million of Congressionally-directed spending via Senator Leahy). \$1.72 million of State of Vermont Pollution Control grant (estimates from VT DEC. Once project goes into construction these grants will be finalized). In good position versus funding other cities and towns have received to date -- \$17 million in grant funding and \$12 in low-interest 30-year loans.

Project	TPC (May 22)	Grants						Estimated Loan in ~2021 \$	ENR Cost Construction Index		Projected ENR		Projected TPC
		USDA RD/ACOE	CWSRF Subsidy	VTDEC ARPA	Leahy CDS	TDEC PC Gran	Grants Total						
WWTF	\$ 17,175,000	\$ 7,085,600	\$ 375,600	-	-	\$ 1,436,800	\$ 8,898,000	\$10,503,000	12237	Jul-21	14500	Nov-23	\$ 20,351,189
3 Sewer Segments	\$ 2,809,000	\$ 119,600	-	-	-	\$ 463,000	\$ 582,600		12647	Nov-21	14000	May-23	\$ 3,109,512
MDPS	\$ 6,700,000	-	-	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 3,000,000	-	\$ 6,000,000	\$700,000	12647	Nov-21	14750	Jan-24	\$ 7,814,106
2 ACOE Sewer Segments	\$ 2,235,000	\$ 1,452,750	-	-	-	-	\$ 1,452,750	\$782,250	12647	Nov-21	15500	Jan-25	\$ 2,739,187
	\$ 28,919,000						\$ 16,933,350	\$11,985,250					\$ 34,013,994

Reviewed timeline of when different projects will go out to bid. Cost estimates of the project will be updated when the projects go out to bid. (see chart below)



Assessor with other municipalities. That option being explored and more information to be presented to council when available.

- Managing three elections: Primary: August, 2022; General Election: November, 2022; Annual Meeting: March, 2023
- Leveraging / enhancing office space for visitors: Increase public research space: a) Redesign counter to provide citizens w/ speedier, safer access; b) Upgrade printer features/scanning to color/higher volumes
- Selecting new audit firm. RFP out. Responses due 6/13/22 Board of Auditors to assist with selection process.
- NEMRC: Anticipate substantial reduction in usage in FY 23 (versus FY 22) with presence of new Treasurer, support from Admin. Asst.

Alderman Hawley pointed out that the FY 23 budget numbers were not correctly updated; amount stated for Assessor needs to be increased. Council members provided staff with suggestions, edits and additions. There was discussion about a shared assessor and that it was a better alternative. City is on the cloud and has its land records available on line. No action taken.

**f. City Council review of non-substantive issues of final draft of the proposed amendments to the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations. \***

**Mayor Chabot reviewed his memo to council (in packet)** and explained he had reviewed the draft minutes from the 5/10/22 council meeting which include, in detail, concerns raised by Alderman Hawley about the proposed amendments to the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations. He also spoke with Planning Commission Chair Haggett and Zoning Administrator Garon. Non-substantive issues were identified as:

**ARTICLE V: PROCEDURES REQUIRING REVIEW BY DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD**

- Section 505- Participation of Interested Persons
- The first paragraph in Section 505 should be moved to the Section 504.

**ARTICLE X: PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT**

- Section 1006.D- General Standards, Density Bonuses
- Alderman Hawley noted that density bonuses were listed for disabilities, elderly low income, and workforce housing in the beginning of the section, but three sentences down, workforce housing" was left out of the listing.

**ARTICLE XII: PARKING, LOADING AND DRIVEWAYS**

- Section 1202 Off-Street Parking Requirements
- Alderman Hawley noted concern over the new parking requirements, noting that one parking space per unit for multi-family dwellings would not be enough generate enough parking. Should say "minimum."

**ARTICLE XIII: SIGNS**

- Section 1301 Permanent Sign Permit and Application
- 1301.1 belongs in definitions. Definition of temporary sign conflicts with 1302.

Alderman Hawley requested changes relative to definitions expressed in a 4/7/22 email to Chair of Planning Commission and Zoning Administrator.

- ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT follow state statute as a distinct unit that is clearly subordinate to a single-family household dwelling and has facilities and provisions for independent living including sleeping, food preparation, and sanitation.
- DRIVE-THROUGH, add the word business. BUSINESS: A commercial establishment where one may obtain services through a window directly from their vehicle.
- SHORT-TERM RENTAL definition be stricken.
- SKETCH PLAN should read "land development" for clarity and consistency.

Alderman Rakowski made a motion that council accept these four non-substantive changes and incorporate them into the proposed amendments to the zoning and subdivision regulations.

Alderman Austin seconded

Mayor Chabot offered a friendly amendment to include the four requested changes relative to definitions, made by Alderman Hawley (based on his 4/7/22 email to Shannon Haggett and Peter Garon.

Alderman Rakowski and Alderman Austin accepted that friendly amendment.

Motion passed unanimously

**g. City Council vote on proposed amendments to the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations. \***

Alderman Rakowski made a motion to approve the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations as amended. Alderman Austin seconded. There was robust discussion by both Council members and community members attending meeting. Vote on motion: Yes: 6 No: 1 (Alderman Hawley)

Mayor Chabot thanked the community for their participation in developing the regulations and for the discussion at the meeting and asked that residents continue to send their feedback to the Planning Commission and to the Council about the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.

**8. City Manager Report**

- Memo re: Police Citizen Review Board (CRB) Options for Implementation. Ed Adrian, Monaghan & Safar. Summary.

- CRBEC recommended an ordinance that "included a provision requiring a vote by Vergennes residents to amend or abolish the ordinance." Vergennes residents do not have the power to amend or abolish ordinances. Reserved for the City Council. Doubtful that legislature would approve a charter change that included this language.
- Quickest, simplest strategy is for Council to create an advisory body that could help facilitate communications from the public to either the city manager and/or police chief. The advisory committee would be subject to the Vermont Open Meetings Law (OML) and Vermont Public Records Act (PRA).
- **Vergennes Public Art Corridor Planning Forum at Vergennes Opera House, Thursday, June 2, 2022 at 6:00pm. Collaboration of Vergennes Partnership, City of Vergennes, ACRPC.**

- c. **Watershed Recreation Reserve Fund Policy, per request from Council about potentially increasing the amount from the fund to support Recreation. Alderwoman Rakowski stated that the \$6,000 per year allocated to the Swimming Pool Fund is based on tradition and not policy.**

**9. Mayor's Report**

- May 26 at 6 pm at Vermont Agency of Transportation and Addison County Regional Planning Commission hosting workshops re: the Planning and Environmental Linkages study alternatives to reduce truck traffic on Route 22A through Vergennes. Virtual meeting to be held June 1.

[www.vergennespel.com](http://www.vergennespel.com)

- Congratulations to Vergennes resident Chris Therrien of Boy Scout Troop 539, Green Mountain Council, who has achieved Eagle Scout Status. He is a 2022 graduate of Vergennes High School, is headed for the Vermont National Guard in the Fall and is interested in a career in law enforcement.

- Reminder that Memorial Day is a time to remember all the men and women who have served, and their service continues to allow us to have meetings where many opinions can be expressed, freely.

Alderwoman Rakowski offered official congratulations to Alderwoman Kaslow on welcoming her baby boy.

**10. Adjournment**