

1 **Town of Charlotte**  
2 **PLANNING COMMISSION**  
3 **Meeting Conducted at Town Hall and via Teleconference**  
4 **October 5, 2023**

5  
6 ***DRAFT – subject to approval by the Planning Commission***  
7

8 **Planning Commission:** Charlie Pughe (*Chair*), Robert Bloch, Carrie Spear, Gerald Bouchard, Linda  
9 Radimer, Kyra Wegman. *absent:* Matt Krasnow (*Vice Chair*).

10 **Staff:** Larry Lewack, Town Planner; Nicole Burnell, Recording Secretary

11 **OTHERS:** Paul Plante, JD Herlihy, Frank Tenney, Maggie Citarella, Claudia Mucklow, Charles  
12 Russell, Taylor Newton, Paige Reynolds, Dan Mallach, R. Moore, Meryl Hartman, Kelly Devine,  
13 Deidre Holmes, Beth Humstone, Sharon Mount.

14  
15 ***Posted Agenda:***

16 7:00 PM Call to Order

17 7:02 PM Changes to Agenda (if any); Public Comment

18 7:05 PM Kickoff Village Master Plan project: Introduce Dubois & King team; brainstorm  
19 public outreach & engagement process; how Commission will be involved

20 8:00 PM Complete review of Thompson’s Point & Nonconforming Structures LURs: using  
21 rubric from Sept. 21 mtg. Determine next steps, schedule

22 8:45 PM Review & approve draft meeting minutes: June 29, July 20, Sept. 21 mtgs.

23 8:45 PM Adjourn  
24

25 **Call to Order:** Charlie Pughe called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.  
26

27 **Changes to Agenda (if any):** None.

28 **Public Comment:** None.  
29

30 **Kickoff Village Master Plan project: Introduce Dubois & King team; brainstorm public  
31 outreach & engagement process; how Commission will be involved:**

32 Taylor Newton, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) recapped  
33 discussion at the staff kick-off meeting (which took place Sept. 29). Project goals include creating  
34 master plans for both villages, based upon extensive public outreach & engagement; preparing  
35 updates to the Land Use Regulations (LURs) for Planning Commission review; then a community  
36 outreach campaign to educate residents on the effects of these changes prior to a town-wide vote  
37 in March 2025. Deirdre Holmes added that a study of transit options will be managed by the same  
38 consultants (Dubois & King) leading the village master plan project, during its first year.

39 Taylor said a project Steering Committee will be formed, and have monthly meetings  
40 throughout the project, to ensure adherence to the timeline, monitor progress towards project  
41 objectives, and address any barriers which may arise. Robert Bloch asked what the Planning  
42 Commission’s role will be, given there will be a Steering Committee. Taylor responded that the  
43 Steering Committee will include liaisons from the Planning Commission, Conservation  
44 Commission and Energy Committee. They will help ensure Dubois & King understand current  
45 conditions and issues, past efforts, help them refine develop public participation plans, and  
46 provide guidance throughout. Robert suggested public education be woven into the project scope  
47 from the start, versus focused on the back end. Taylor answered the CCRPC will provide

48 continuous project updates, and that the public participation plan should outline educational  
49 outreach efforts. Charlie clarified that the goal is engagement from the beginning. Kyra Wegman  
50 suggested we develop an 'elevator pitch' to be used by all those involved in outreach, to explain  
51 the project briefly. Beth Humstone said it's key that resident ideas frame the vision. Larry Lewack  
52 gave examples of the elements of a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process, to ensure  
53 that there are many points of views represented, and expressed hope that Planning Commission  
54 members would actively lead many of these conversations.

55 Taylor reviewed the project timeline. This fall and winter, focus will be on review of past  
56 efforts & studies, and developing & launching stakeholder engagement. Robert Bloch asked Taylor  
57 about his experience with Selectboard adoption or endorsement of master plans. Taylor said this  
58 may not be necessary, but could help with building public support for bylaws changes, when that  
59 time comes. More likely scenario is that these village plans would be folded into the update of the  
60 Town Plan, which follows soon after this project concludes in 2025. Dan Mallach added that the  
61 goal of this project is to develop community vision with broad & deep outreach, process integrity.

62 Larry asked Charlie if we should determine which Planning Commission member will serve  
63 as its liaison on the project Steering Committee. Charlie suggested that this be taken up at the next  
64 meeting (October 19<sup>th</sup>), to allow Commission members time to consider if they are interested.  
65 Larry pointed out that project information will be accessible on the new Town website under  
66 *Planning for our Future*. Robert suggested that we promote the new town website widely, so  
67 people know to look there for this info.

68

69 **Complete review of Thompson's Point & Nonconforming Structures LURs: using rubric from**  
70 **Sept. 21 mtg. Determine next steps, schedule:**

71 Charlie stated that he had a different view for the rubric, specifically the problems to  
72 address be at a higher-level than those listed at the September 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. Beth offered  
73 perspective as a Thompson's Point resident. Beth stated that any building project requires  
74 conditional use review, which is costly. Design Review role is arbitrary/subjective, and delays  
75 projects. There are also concerns about the Tree Warden's role in authorizing removal of trees.  
76 Charles Russell mentioned the impractical side yard setbacks. Beth added that climate change  
77 necessitates changes to structures. Charles suggested that changes be allowed if they improve  
78 conditions. Frank Tenney pointed out that many cottages are built on slopes; this should be a  
79 factor in determining what changes to structures should be allowed. Claudia Mucklow suggested  
80 that building on steep slopes and use of heavy equipment should not be allowed. Beth pointed out  
81 that some lots are flat, new construction sometimes requires use of heavy equipment, cautioned  
82 against creating blanket rules. Frank added that there is redundancy between town shoreland  
83 rules and state shoreland protection rules. JD Herlihy agreed with Charlie's suggestion to focus on  
84 major problems with the current T.P rules, and asked the Commission to identify what that is.

85 Robert responded Thompson's Point residents would like to reasonably update, expand,  
86 modernize, or improve their cottages. Current rules make that exceedingly difficult. Charlie agreed  
87 and noted that the Town Plan flags the importance of preserving the look & feel of Thompson's  
88 Point, while allowing reasonable change. Kyra Wegman suggested that specifying the distance  
89 between camps instead of side yard setbacks might allow for this. Charlie responded with the  
90 challenges in doing this, which led to discussion of leases and taxes at Thompson's Point. Kelly  
91 Devine pointed out that revising Thompson's Point regulations would lessen appeals and reduce  
92 legal costs. Charlie responded that regulatory clarity is the goal.

93 Charlie stated that standards for flexible application of Thompson's Point dimensional  
94 standards may need to be different than standards for non-conforming structures for the rest of  
95 town. Beth reminded the Commission that some lease holders have two lots and in general are

96 also interested in preserving the historic feel of the neighborhood. Larry spoke to the previously  
97 discussed flexibility of relocating structures away from the lake. In response, Charlie pointed out  
98 that if everyone relocated, Thompson's Point would have a different feel. Charlie recapped that the  
99 higher-level issue is allowing lease holders flexibility while maintaining the integrity of  
100 Thompson's Point; LURs should be reviewed and reconsidered based on this.

101 Charlie suggested the role of the now-dissolved Design Review Board be replaced with  
102 review by a design professional. Maggie Citarella and Sharon Mount would like to see  
103 environmental standards addressed more specifically in TP rules. Larry pointed out that the  
104 Developmental Review Board already considers the impact of T.P. projects on areas of high public  
105 value, and does that consistently. Charles suggested revised rules (not just for T.P.) encourage  
106 'best practices' such as using semi-permeable pavers vs. traditional impervious gravel base for  
107 driveways. If used, we can provide some allowance for this in calculating lot coverage, since this  
108 reduces harmful runoff.

109 *Next steps:* 1) Larry will send out the revised T.P. worksheet to PC members, seeking  
110 additional edits; 2) At the next meeting, we will again take up revised draft amendments, which  
111 may be further revised, based upon the insights gleaned during this discussion.

112

113 **Review/approve draft PC meeting minutes: for June 29, July 20, September 21, mtgs.:**

114 The quorum needed to approve the June 29<sup>th</sup> draft minutes was not in attendance.

115 **MOTION by Robert Bloch; seconded by Kyra Wegman to approve the PC meeting**  
116 **minutes for July 20, 2023. VOTE: 4 ayes, motion carried.** Linda Radimer and Gerald Bouchard  
117 abstained, as they were absent from that meeting.

118 **MOTION by Gerald Bouchard; seconded by Linda Radimer to approve the PC meeting**  
119 **minutes for September 21, 2023, as amended. VOTE: 5 ayes, motion carried.** Charlie Pughe  
120 abstained, as he was absent from that meeting.

121

122 **Adjournment:**

123 **MOTION by Robert Bloch; seconded by, Gerald Bouchard, to adjourn the meeting.**

124 **VOTE: 6 ayes, motion carried.** The meeting was adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

125

126 *Minutes respectfully submitted:*

127 Nicole Burnell, Recording Secretary, with edits by Larry Lewack, Town Planner