
Memo

DATE: December 14, 2021

TO: Williston Selectboard

FROM: Erik Wells, Town Manager

RE: PLANNING DEPARTMENT POSITION WITH ENERGY FOCUS

I discussed the role of a new position in the Planning Department further with Director Matt Boulanger to evaluate the role and the fit within the planning program. In examining the department's structure staff suggests the role fall under the title of Planner with a focus on energy and community development. The current department's general structure is as follows:

Planning Director & Zoning Administrator: Department management and oversight of implementation of town plan and adherence to development review standards, zoning oversight and enforcement.

Senior Planner, Conservation: Responsible for conservation and natural area planning within community, lead in project implementation for conversation work inclusive of capital projects, shared development review duties.

Planner, Development Review: Responsible for plan review in built environment in Town, anticipated duties involving form-based code implementation.

Planning Technician: Project intake and general permit review, lead for public inquiries and general questions, may be tasked with plan review.

Note, the title of Senior Planner is an advancement opportunity for any planner position in the Department.

A new Planner, Energy & Community Development would provide the lead in supporting the implementation of the Town's Energy Plan and other community planning objectives focused on fostering vibrancy and tackling major goals within the Town Plan that require a sustained staff lead with a specific focus. Work beyond specific Energy Plan tasks for this position are anticipated to be focused on additional Planning program elements that have a strong connection to energy goals, like compact development, sustainable transportation, and affordable housing. The current planning staff has focuses on the natural and built spaces in Town – this position would address the interplay and the elements between the two to support these community needs. In addition, current department staff can support the goals of this position as capacity is available. As with any new position the scope and structure of the work will be better defined over time.

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Staff suggests budgeting a hiring range of \$21 - \$23 per hour for the position dependent upon experience and qualifications. The impact on a full budget year under a part-time and full-time scenario using the top of that range is as follows:

- Part-time (24 hours per week): \$33,000 (inclusive of wage and retirement benefit, not eligible for insurance benefits).
- Full-time (40 hours per week): \$72,000 (inclusive of wages and benefits)

Note, an employee is fully benefits eligible at 30 hours per week. A draft job description is as follows:

Draft Job Description

PLANNER– ENERGY & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Grade 5

BASIC FUNCTIONS:

- Provides staff support and assistance to the Planning Director, the Energy Committee, the Planning Commission, and the Development Review Board.
- Provides project plan review with focus on meeting Town standards for energy efficiency.
- Conducts policy and best practice research for energy and climate change resiliency to support the planning program and overall town operations, inclusive of data collection.
- Project manager for town objectives inclusive of energy, affordable housing and other programs designed for the betterment of the community.
- Leads community engagement and education around energy efficiency and program implementation.
- Participates in select long-range planning projects, as assigned by the Planning Director.

CHARACTERISTIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Works with landowners, residents, business owners, and town staff in reviewing development proposals and permit applications. This includes reviewing permit applications for minor projects and preparing, or assisting in the preparation of, staff comments on major development proposals for compliance with adopted town regulations.
- Prepares maps and GIS analyses, as needed for department functions.
- Attends meetings of the Energy Committee and may attend meetings of the Planning Commission, and the Development Review Board as assigned, and provides technical

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assistance as requested. May occasionally be required to attend meetings of the Selectboard, or Conservation Commission.

- Works cooperatively and effectively with state and other government agencies, engineers, architects, lawyers, real estate appraisers, bankers, developers, planning consultants, and others in carrying out assigned functions.
- Prepares and distributes public hearing notices.
- Prepares grant applications and administers grants for various projects as directed.

SUPERVISION RECIEVED:

General supervision and the assignment of projects are provided the Planning Director.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED:

No direct supervision.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Bachelor's degree in urban planning, landscape architecture, public administration, sustainability, or another closely related academic discipline, plus one to two years of relevant work experience; or a combination of education and experience from which comparable knowledge and skills have been acquired.

- Ability to use data to analyze potential impact of energy conservation strategies and communicate this information to resident volunteers and the public.
- Ability to read land surveys, topographic maps, aerial photographs, construction drawings, land development plans, and maps.
- Good familiarity with land use and site planning principles and laws.
- Excellent writing, speaking, and analytical skills.
- Excellent organizational and administrative skills.
- Ability to work cooperatively with the public, Town officials, and other Town personnel, as well as government agencies, developers, community groups, businesses, and others outside of Town government. Customer service and the ability to work with the public is a priority in this position.
- Hands-on GIS capabilities.

This job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and the employee. It is used as a guide for personnel actions and is subject to change by the employer as the needs of the employer and requirements of the job change.

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