

**TOWN OF WILLISTON  
SELECTBOARD  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
November 12, 2019**

**DRAFT**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Terry Macaig (Chair); Jeff Fehrs; Joy Limoge; and Ted Kenney (Gordon St. Hilaire was absent.)

**ADMINISTRATION:** Rick McGuire, Town Manager; Erik Wells, Assistant to the Town Manager; Pat Foley, Chief of Police; Melina Scott, Conservation Planner; Shirley Goodell-Lackey, Finance Director; Matt Boulanger, Planning Director; and Emily Heymann, Planner.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Gwynn Zakov, Vermont League of Cities and Towns; Jeff Carr, President & Senior Economist, EPR Economic and Policy Resources; Dominic Cloud, City Manager, St. Albans; Jeff Nick, President JL Davis Realty; Jason Starr (Williston Observer).

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[Note: Minutes reflect order of the published agenda.]

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Terry Macaig called the meeting to order at 5:10 PM.

**2. Public Comment – General Issues**

There were no comments.

**3. Cannabis Legalization Discussion**

Gwynn Zakov provided the Board with an overview of legislation that has been proposed by the state legislature this past session. The legislation covers legalization of retail sales along with a separate bill concerning taxation of cannabis. Issues include whether towns have the ability to opt in or opt out; what ability do towns have concerning zoning controls; and municipal ability to tax. Ms. Zakov, in response to a question about public outreach, noted the VLCT board will be asking towns to adopt a resolution in support of municipal authority in a commercial cannabis system.

Mr. Boulanger talked about the impact on zoning the proposed legislation of cannabis might have in Williston. He stated that zoning may not be the best tool to regulate commercial cannabis. He noted that Williston also has progressive rules concerning accessory uses. He cited the current beer brewers and their facilities as an example. Possible uses include growing, processing, extraction, warehouses, and retail sales. Mr. Boulanger further stated that medical cannabis sale locations as currently permitted under the town bylaws are not necessarily the best places for retail recreational cannabis sales. Several hemp operations have already been permitted.

#### **4. Economic Resiliency**

Jeff Carr, President and Senior Economist for Economic and Policy Resources, Inc. provided the Board with a PowerPoint presentation covering a range of financial indicators. He predicts that a recession will likely be experienced in the next year or two and raised concerns over the federal deficit and uncertainty created by the federal governments current policies. Mr. Carr also provided information on financial indicators specific to Vermont. Finally, Mr. Carr addressed several steps that can be taken by municipalities to help during periods of economic down turn such as keeping a health fund balance and developing public-private partnerships.

Dominic Cloud, City Manager for the City of St. Albans, provided the Board with a presentation describing the steps taken by St. Albans to develop a series of public-private partnerships to help fund and encourage improvements to both the public infrastructure and private investments in the community.

Finally, Jeff Nick from JL Davis real estate, talked about the things that Williston has done well concerning private development and listed some things the Town may want to consider changing in the future such as the transportation impact fees which are the highest in the region. Mr. Nick also suggested the town consider transportation infrastructure improvements, building height increases and a reconsideration of the drive-through prohibition. He strongly advised against inclusionary zoning as a means of encouraging affordable housing.

Following each presentation board members asked questions and briefly discussed the issues.

#### **5. Adjournment**

With no further business and without objection the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM.

*RScty: RMcGuire*