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For Immediate Release

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Bennington Planning Commission Public Hearing - Amendment to Bennington's Land Use and Development Regulations – Focus is on Inclusion of Form-Based Design Standards

The Bennington Planning Commission will hold a public hearing via Zoom on February 18, 2021, at 6 PM regarding a proposed amendment to Bennington's Land Use and Development Regulations (LUDR) that incorporates form-based design standards and streamlines existing use standards.

Form-based design standards emphasize the regulation of the physical form of buildings and areas over the regulation of uses. This approach aims to lower barriers to new development while encouraging building forms that enhance walkability and safety, accommodate mixed uses, and adapt well to changing uses over time.

Growth and development in Bennington are shaped by two municipal documents: the Bennington Town Plan, and the Bennington Land Use and Development Regulations (LUDR). The town plan provides a framework for decisions that will guide growth and development in Bennington. The LUDR establishes the standards used to implement growth and development. Established under Vermont State law, each is subject to periodic review by the planning commission and adoption by the select board.

The current town plan proposes that the planning commission review form-based land use ordinances, evaluate their effectiveness in communities similar to Bennington, and consider developing comprehensive form-based standards to replace or complement the current LUDR. The planning commission undertook the recommended review and engaged the Bennington County Regional Commission to develop form-based standards to incorporate in the LUDR and to simplify the presentation of current use standards.

The planning commission focused its efforts on developing form-based design standards for the areas in and around Bennington's downtown, including the Central Business, Office Apartment, Urban Mixed Use, Village Commercial and Village Industrial Zoning Districts. The proposed LUDR amendment creates three new form-based design areas in the town center and consolidates regulated land use categories and some existing zoning districts.

Ultimately, the purpose of the revised LUDR is to foster a clear and straightforward articulation of what is envisioned for the future of Bennington's core areas. The guiding principle of these revisions is to allow and encourage compatible uses in these areas with less regulatory restriction and a greater reliance on the form of development to ensure and enhance the economic strength and social fabric of Bennington.

The Planning Commission has asked Cat-TV to broadcast the public hearing on Cat-TV and stream it live on Cat-TV's Facebook page, if possible. If citizens, property owners, or business owners wish to comment regarding the proposed amendment during the hearing, they may call

646-558-8656 and enter the following Meeting ID: 893 5092 9341. They may also use the following link to participate in the public hearing if the hearing is not broadcast on Cat-TV: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89350929341>

A copy of the Public Hearing Draft of the proposed amendment may be found at:

<https://benningtonplanningandpermits.com/amendments/>

A video presentation summarizing a previous draft of the proposed amendment may be found at: <http://www.bcrvt.org/benningtoniudr.html>. There have been some minor changes to the proposed amendment, including the names of some of the zoning districts and form-based design areas since the video was made, but all of the substantive content of the proposed amendment remains the same in the Public Hearing Draft.

Following the planning commission's public hearing, the planning commission may modify the proposed amendment based on comments received by the public. The planning commission will then submit the amendment to the select board. The select board will hold a public hearing(s) on the amendment and then may choose to adopt the planning commission's proposal or seek further revisions prior to adoption.

People with questions may call the Bennington Planning Department at 802 442-1037.