

PLANNING COMMISSION
Draft Minutes
November 2, 2016

Members Present: Sally Miller, Lowell Gray, Susan Boston, Jeff Bendis, Keri Cole, Michael Pacht
Members Absent: Sam Segal
Others Present: Michael Weinberger, Seth Warren, Charlie Wilson, Fred Hunt, Mary MacVey, Michael Brands

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The October 13, 2016 minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

III. BUSINESS

A. Joint meeting with TDRB on zoning changes

Mr. Wilson and Mr. Hunt representing the TDRB were present to discuss the list of proposed amendments to the Town Zoning Regulations. The two members noted they had no concerns with the proposals and supported the list as written.

The Town Planner noted a concern with Short Term Rentals whereby there is no restriction on the number of short term rentals one may own. Recently in both the Village and the Town, applicants have purchased neighboring properties with the intent of establishing short term rentals. The issue is the diminishing number of full time rental opportunities as it is already very difficult to find an apartment. With websites such as Airbnb and others, Short term rental clients are very easy to find. Touristy towns such as Woodstock are targeted by vacation rental companies.

A lengthy discussion took place. The majority of members were opposed to additional restrictions on home owners.

Enforcement of Short Term Rentals appears to be more of an issue. The Town Planner mentioned that an annual letter from the permit holder stating how many times they have rented their property and amounts paid for Vermont State Rooms and Meals Tax may be helpful. Currently, cell tower owners send a letter every January noting compliance with their permits. The Town Planner will ask other jurisdictions if the suggested letter of conformance is viable.

Zoning map changes were discussed. The Gray Perkins lot next to the South Woodstock Country Store would be changed from Residential Low Density to Hamlet Commercial. Two parcels with a residential use abutting the Town Garage property would be rezoned from BS/LI to Residential Low Density. This would maintain the same residential density of one unit per half acre, but would remove the commercial industrial allowances of the BS/LI district.

B. Leo Werner - Cheese Aging/Storage Facility

Mr. Werner did not attend the meeting.

The Town Planner noted he met with Tom Debevoise the property owner, Mr. Warner and his son at the site of the proposed storage facility. The group walked the property and determined the best area for the facility would be close to Route 4. The soil closer to Route 4 is less fertile. The land drops off significantly 200' from Route 4. There is an existing point of access already in place which was created for the Town's silt storage after Tropical Storm Irene.

A map delineating a 2 acre parcel on the northwest corner of the Debevoise Route 4 property was shown to the PC. The parcel would abut the Lincoln Covered Inn which is zoned Business Service / Light Industrial. Rezoning the parcel BS/LI would allow the desired 14,000 square foot cheese aging and storage facility with a Conditional Use and Site Plan review.

The future owner would also like to have a small area of retail. To achieve this in the BS/LI district, a new section was created called Ag-Related Retail. This would allow up to 5% of the total space to be used for ag-related retail which would be the sale of agricultural items grown or produced within 50 miles of the site and that meet the State's definition of "Accepted Agricultural Practices".

The Town Planner had hoped for feedback on the proposed zoning changes from Mr. Warner.

Chair Miller noted it would be very difficult to build a 14,000 square foot facility that looks like a real barn. The issue of a business failure was discussed. What does one do with a large empty 14,000 square foot warehouse?

Ms. Cole suggested that Mr. Warner should submit a complete detailed application that can be reviewed as such. The PC agreed. The Town Planner will contact Mr. Warner.

C. Michael Weinberger

Mr. Weinberger, architect and property owner, and Mr. Warren, realtor, discussed a possible zoning change with the PC. The property located at the bottom of Hartland Hill Road was purchased in 1985. Historically, the site was a creamery with a loading dock

directly onto Hartland Hill Road. Mr. Weinberger operated an architect's office out of the building which has been closed for a number of years.

The 1/4 acre property has been for sale for many years. The building has two floors (basement and first), each with 1100 square feet. There is parking for seven cars. The building would be very difficult to convert to a residential use. The property is zoned Residential High Density. This was changed in the early 1990s from Commercial / Light Industrial due to traffic concerns caused by the intersection of Route 4 and Hartland Hill Road.

Currently a local building contractor wishes to purchase the property. The main use would be office space. However, cabinet making is also envisioned. The current zoning does not allow commercial uses, office, or industrial uses such as cabinet making.

The PC noted the property across the street, although undeveloped, is zoned Commercial /Light Industrial. Extending the C/LI line south across the road to include the Weinberger property would allow the intended use.

After additional discussion, Mr. Gray motioned with a second by Ms. Cole to rezone the Weinberger property Commercial / Light Industrial. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote (Mr. Bendis had left earlier).

The Town Planner will send a hearing notice to the paper and abutters for the December 7, 2016 PC meeting. Following PC approval, the Board of Trustees would be able to hear the request in early January.

D. Gerrish - Act 250

An Act 250 hearing is set for November 4, 2016 to hear a request by Nicholas Burke and the Gerrish Corporation for an extension of the permit conditions relating to removal of the Stone House located at the Gerrish east end property. A letter from the State's Historic Preservation Office was sent around to all members. The letter was very well written. The PC agreed that the letter addressed all the PC's concerns. **After additional discussion, Mr. Gray motioned with a second by Ms. Cole to support the State Historic Preservation Office letter. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.**

E. TRORC Energy Planning Proposal

Following a brief discussion, the PC unanimously agreed to accept the TRORC invitation to participate in their offer of assistance for enhanced energy planning. Act 174, enacted this past legislative session, allows towns to participate in Act 248 hearings on alternative energy applications. To enable participation, towns must receive a "certificate of energy compliance" from the Public Service Board. The TRORC would help the Town compile all the necessary information for the certificate.

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IV. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for December 7, 2016.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Brands, AICP
Town/Village Planner