

PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes
September 7, 2016

Members Present: Sally Miller, Lowell Gray, Susan Boston, Jeff Bendis

Members Absent: Sam Segal, Keri Cole, Michael Pacht

Others Present: Janet Graham, Steve Cota, Michael Brands

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The July 6, 2016 minutes were approved by unanimous vote. (As discussed in August)

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. V-3264-16 68 Pleasant St., LLC

The application is to amend zoning regulations for Commercial/Light Industrial district to allow up to three low occupancy apartments. The property is located at 68 Pleasant Street and is zoned Commercial Light Industrial / Design Review.

Ms. Graham, representing 68 Pleasant Street LLC, presented the application.

The Town Planner noted that this is not a public hearing as a quorum did not exist at the August meeting nor was there an application for the August meeting.

The request is to add Section 531 Multiple Low Occupancy Apartments (MLOA) of the Town Zoning Regulations to the Village Zoning Regulations. Four Residential Units within existing buildings are allowed in the Town Zoning Regulations. The request for MLOA in the Village Zoning Regulations is for three residential units in existing buildings. The use would be allowed in only the Commercial / Light Industrial district.

The Town Planner noted that site plan approval should be added to the regulation to assure parking issues are addressed.

The applicant felt a total of five bedrooms would be sufficient for her property. A total of six bedrooms are allowed in four units of the Town Zoning Regulations version.

After discussion, the PC agreed that a total of six bedrooms should be allowed.

The PC reviewed the tax map for properties within the C/LI district to verify the potential number of units that could be created. The PC agreed that the number of properties that could support a MLOA request appear to be very small in number.

After additional discussion, Mr. Gray motioned with a second by Ms. Boston to approve the requested amendment for a public hearing as discussed above.

The public hearing would be held October 13, 2016 at 7:30 pm.

B. Leo Werner - Cheese Aging/Storage Facility

At the August meeting, Mr. Werner representing his son, asked if zoning changes could be made that would allow a 12,000 square foot cheese aging/storage facility. The Plymouth Cheese Factory would like a facility on Route 4 which is accessible to large tractor trailers.

In discussion of the request, the Town Planner expressed his support for extending an existing commercial industrial zone over that of creating a separate overlay zone. Allowing construction of a large building outside of an industrial zone could lead to future complications should the business abandon the site. What to do with a 12,000 sf building not easily transferrable to a residential use?

Mr. Werner has not made additional contact with the Town Planner since the August meeting. The discussion was placed on hold.

The PC did discuss the Town of Randolph's proposed Agri-Preneurial language which was emailed earlier by the Town Planner. The section mainly addresses allowance of enhanced uses on existing farm sites such as weddings, festivals and farm based restaurants.

C. East End Economic Brochure

The 119 page East End Economic Brochure was emailed earlier to all PC members. Chair Miller noted that although she sent it out to gather input, the Economic Development Committee asked to keep the document under wraps for the moment. The EDC would like to have a special breakout event for the eventual release. If the PC does have comments, Chair Miller would like to receive them.

D. Town/Village Plan Update

The 2016 Town/Village Plan was adopted on July 20, 2016 by the Select Board and Board of Trustees. A digital version is available on the Town of Woodstock and the TRORC website. The P&Z office is working on a hard copy amendment that can be inserted at the end of the remaining 2014 plans, of which there are 30 left. The insert should be available by next meeting.

E. Town Zoning Rewrite

The Select Board held a public hearing on August 16, 2016 and approved the proposed Density Calculation amendment for Article III of the Town Zoning Regulations. The amendment clarifies the residential density requirement for each zoning district.

The Town Planner presented a list of amendments that have been discussed and approved up to this point. A few months ago, work on the amendments stopped to amend the Town / Village Plan.

Two new amendments were discussed. The vernal pool section had been changed earlier to reflect on unverified vernal pools sites. The vernal pools sites would be added to the Critical Areas map and will be reviewed unless a professional wetland delineator or the Conservation Commission declares the sites not to be vernal pools.

The Town's wetlands were delineated in 2004 via ortho-stereoscopic studies which show wetland vegetation based on the colors of the map. Using this method, the lower vegetation below the trees does not show. Therefore numerous wetlands, many below hemlock trees do not show up on the Critical Areas map. To assure proper review of all wetlands, the Town Planner proposes adding the following underlined text: "Lands identified as wetlands on the Town's Critical Areas Inventory map or wetlands delineated by the Conservation Commission or a professional wetland delineator..."

A second item is the issue of nonconforming uses. The Town Zoning Regulations have a one year noncompliance time frame. One year has proven to be too restrictive to either sell a nonconforming use or reestablishing the nonconforming use. Many towns, such as Randolph, have a two year window with a two year additional extension (to be requested from the TDRB). After discussion, the PC agreed to a two year window for nonconforming uses, which at 12 months would be reviewed for a potential 12 month extension by the TDRB.

After discussion, the PC agreed that input from the Select Board should be requested regarding the 2016 State Flood Hazard / River Corridor. By adopting the model regulation, the Town would receive additional funding for natural disasters, but an additional 115 homes would fall under a floodplain type review process. The Town Planner will talk to the Town Manager.

The Town Planner will put all the changes in one document and distribute to the TDRB for review. The TDRB will be invited to the October 15 Planning Commission meeting for discussion of the proposed changes.

IV. NEXT MEETING

Due to the fact the Town Planner will be out of town for the next regular meeting, the meeting was changed to Thursday October 13, 2016.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Brands, AICP
Town/Village Planner