

PLANNING COMMISSION
Draft Notes
May 3, 2017

Members Present: Sam Segal, Susan Boston, Jeff Bendis
Members Absent: Sally Miller, Lowell Gray, Keri Cole, Michael Pacht
Others Present: Sonya Stover, Jill Davies, Patricia Campbell, Patrick Fultz, Ben Pauly, Michael Brands

I. CALL TO ORDER

Due to lack of quorum, the meeting was not called to order.

Newly elected Selectboard members, Ms. Stover and Ms. Davies introduced themselves to the PC.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the March 29, 2017 minutes was continued.

III. PUBLIC HEARING

A. 2017 Town Zoning Rewrite

The Public Hearing was continued to the next PC meeting scheduled for June 7, 2017.

However, comments were taken from the audience.

The Town Planner distributed copies of the proposed amendments.

Mr. Fultz, owner of the Sleep Woodstock Motel in West Woodstock, does not support the Short Term Rental (STR) amendments. He feels going from 10 rentals per year to 12 rentals per year encourages more property owners to consider short term rentals. As a lodging business owner this will cause him to lose income. A private home owner does not have the regulatory oversight nor the costs of doing business that he has.

Mr. Fultz noted other lodging operators also do not support the amendments.

The Town Planner referenced the letter sent from the owners of The Woodstocker, a B&B on River Street, that also opposes the STR amendments for the same reasons as Mr. Fultz.

As a destination town, Woodstock is more likely to have Short Term Rentals than other communities which in turn, creates a need for more regulation of the use.

Mr. Bendis, noting he had been the owner of a B&B, asked about competition from another B&B versus competition from a private home owner.

Mr. Fultz noted another B&B would be competition on a level playing ground.

The Town Planner explained the nature of STR enforcement. On a monthly basis, AirBnB and other such websites are viewed to seek out users of the service. The websites generally contain calendars noting when the use takes place. Enforcement is taken with home owners that are not in compliance with the STR regulations. The number of permits issued have been increasing over the past couple of years as the service becomes more common.

Mr. Segal suggested that Mr. Fultz, should he desire change, should create new ideas that could be discussed at the next PC meeting.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Integrated Agriculture

Mr. Pauly, Director of the Woodstock Inn's Kelly Way Gardens, presented six pages of information to the PC on a proposed Town Zoning amendment to allow events on agricultural sites. The information was forwarded to PC members in advance of the meeting.

The need for the amendment is to allow events such as weddings on the Kelly Way property owned by the Woodstock Resort Corporation. An application in March was denied by the TDRB due to the use not being allowed.

The amendment is entitled Integrated Agriculture and is based on similar regulations recently adopted in the Towns of Hinesburg and Shelburne. These two regulations are considered by State agencies and municipal planners to be the most appropriate set on the subject in Vermont.

Mr. Pauly suggested allowing the uses in all zones that allow agriculture: Forestry, Residential Five Acre, Residential Three Acre and Residential One Acre.

The Town Planner noted that the one acre zoning areas may be too dense in population to support large scale events and suggested restricting the uses to the Forestry and Five Acre zones. The Three Acre Residential zone is a single one parcel district on Hartland Hill Road.

A definition of integrated agriculture was read, essentially accessory uses to agriculture. Mr. Pauly recommends a two tiered use: primary and secondary integrated agriculture. Primary is dependent on crops or products produced directly on site whereas secondary uses allow outside products to be sold on site.

A conditional use would be required for all integrated agriculture uses to allow review of

all zoning standards such as character of the area, parking, traffic, lighting, noise, etc. This would allow control of the potential negative impacts of a proposal.

Paragraph E. would govern secondary agricultural activities via a revenue assessment of the use. The formula requires that at least two-thirds of gross revenue is to be derived from primary activities.

The Town Planner stated the TDRB has concerns with allowing certain events such as weddings on all properties that meet the State's ag definition. A maple sugar production selling 50 gallons of syrup meets the definition as does a person selling 6 dozen eggs a week. A tighter standard may be necessary.

The Town Planner noted that this information packet has been sent to the TDRB to be discussed at their May 23rd meeting. Mr. Segal suggested that additional input be sought from other farmers on the issue. Ms. Cole, via email, noted support for the primary integrated agriculture but had concerns with the secondary integrated agriculture as presented.

Mr. Pauly was congratulated on the information presented, noting this is a great start.

Mr. Segal stated that it would be difficult to discuss the proposal due to the absence of a quorum. Discussion was continued to the June 7th meeting. The Town Planner was asked to record the various concerns raised.

V. OPEN DISCUSSION None

VI. NEXT MEETING
The next meeting is scheduled for June 7, 2017.

VII. ADJOURNMENT
The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Brands, AICP
Town/Village Planner