

PLANNING COMMISSION
Draft Minutes
March 29, 2017

Members Present: Sally Miller, Lowell Gray, Susan Boston, Sam Segal, Keri Cole
Members Absent: Jeff Bendis, Michael Pacht
Others Present: Bettyanne McGuire, David McGuire, Michael Trotsky, Amy Trotsky, Katie Trotsky, Susan Pepe, Jim Pepe, Daniel Cummings, James Pepe, Susan Pepe, David Beilman, Ben Pauly, Nick Scheu, Michael Brands

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm.
Mr. Trotsky recorded the meeting.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The March 1, 2017 minutes were approved with a minor amendment.

III. BUSINESS

A. Town Zoning Rewrite

1. Westerdale Road Discussion Continued

Ms. McGuire, representing the Westerdale Road neighbors, read a short letter to the PC. The group recognizes that the Business Service/Light Industrial (BS/LI) density changes were actually made in 2010 and not in 2013 at the time of the Multiple Low Occupancy Apartment adoption. They prefer that the Halle/Barry and Adam properties be rezoned Residential One Acre. However, they can live with the current zoning as is BS/LI. They do oppose the change to a Residential Low Density.

Ms. McGuire also noted that Mr. Barry has not filed for a State Waste Water permit as stated at the March 1st meeting.

Mr. Beilman, architect representing the new owners of the former Stott property, stated the current owners are willing to leave the Residential Five Acre zoning as is for the moment. They have just acquired the property and have yet to understand the zoning implications.

Chair Miller stated a preference for any change in zoning to occur now. The Westerdale zoning discussion has stalled the adoption process. She wanted to close discussion of the issue and did not look forward to reopening the discussion in the near future.

After brief discussion, Ms. Cole motioned with a second by Mr. Segal to keep the Westerdale Road zoning as it is currently zoned. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.

2. List of Zoning Amendments

The Town Planner sent a proposed change concerning the unknown vernal pool designations that are part of Section 403 Conservation Districts. The Vermont Eco Center has mapped numerous vernal pool sites around the State. The Town Planner noted the Critical Areas Map needs to be updated to include new information such as this.

The PC made numerous comments and finally settled on language which requires ground truthing of the medium and unknown labeled vernal pools at the pre-development stage. The text will be rewritten and sent around via email for final confirmation.

An additional vernal pool item is the update of the Jefferson Salamander locations. The Vermont Eco Center has discovered the presence of Jeffersons in three additional vernal pools. Two of the three additional sites are near the Vondell Reservoir area and the third is located in the largest of the 4 vernal pool complex at the top of Mt. Peg.

The PC agreed to the inclusion of the three additional sites.

2. Zoning Map Changes

A discussion of the proposed Westerdale Road zoning map changes was continued from the March 1, 2017 meeting.

The Town Planner sent a letter and followed up with a phone call to Don Amero, who owns property Route 4 property (Parcel 31.01.51.). The parcel is zoned Hamlet Commercial (HC). A small store on site has not been operational for many years. Mr. Amero asked to retain the Hamlet Commercial designation instead of the requested rezoning to Residential Medium Density. After discussion, the PC agreed to leave the zoning as is.

With the conclusion of the Westerdale Road discussion and other potential map changes, the PC noted the Town Zoning Regulation rewrite was complete.

After further discussion, Mr. Segal motioned with a second by Ms. Cole, that May 3, 2017 be set as the date for the Planning Commission Public Hearing required to adopt the 2017 set of Town Zoning Regulations. The motioned passed with a 5-0 vote.

The Town Planner will write the warning and prepare a document noting proposed changes.

C. Re-appoint the Administrative Officer

The Town Planner stated per State statute (T.24 Ch. 117 Sec. 4448) that every three years his position as administrative officer requires a recommendation by the PC and approval by the municipal boards.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Gray motioned with a second by Ms. Cole to recommend that Michael Brands be reappointed as the Town and Village Administrative Officer. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.

IV. OPEN DISCUSSION

A. VCRD Grant

Chair Miller noted the Vermont Council on Rural Development grant submitted by Sustainable Woodstock passed the first hurdle and is short listed for the next level of review. The RFP promotes long-term sustainable goals for the community including renewable energy elements.

B. Kelly Gardens

Mr. Pauly, the Woodstock Inn's Kelly Gardens manager, spoke to the PC. Last night, the TDRB denied an application to allow weddings and large events at the Kelly Gardens site due to the fact the property is zoned Residential Five Acre (R5). The R5 district does not include uses which would allow weddings and large events.

The proposed agricultural uses, tastings and garden tours, fall under the agriculture use category and are exempt from local permitting per State statute.

The TDRB noted the zoning would need to change to enable the denied request. Mr. Pauly asked to amend the Zoning Regulations to allow the large events (up to 120 persons) on agricultural sites such Kelly Gardens.

Mr. Pauly spoke with the Department of Agriculture which stated the State agriculture exemption is meant for working farms and the direct production of food. However, they referenced a booklet entitled, "Sustaining Agriculture". The booklet notes the term agri-preneurial and discusses various planning and zoning scenarios throughout the State.

Mr. Scheu noted the Town Plan includes a good discussion of agri-preneurial and states goals for retaining farms and promoting small scale production.

The PC reviewed a site map of Kelly Gardens and viewed the large zoning map to better understand the situation.

The Town Planner suggested adding a use item to Section 302 Residential Five Acre. The use would then be detailed in Article 5 with standards and limitations that could be reviewed during a conditional use hearing. This would be similar to Short Term Rentals or Home Occupations. He envisioned the item as an auxiliary use to an existing inn with a tie to an agricultural theme.

The PC felt the agricultural tie was important, noting farm to table events etc. are becoming very popular and should be encouraged. The Town Plan would also support this type use.

Mr. Pauly will continue to research the issue, and will work with the Town Planner to draft an amendment.

C. Nick Scheu

Mr. Scheu, former PC member, addressed the PC. He is an abutter to the Woodstock Union High School and has a prominent view of their digital sign. The sign was permitted in 2015 to operate on a two hour interval. There is a current request to change the interval to 6 seconds. The regulations require a static sign. Static means no motion. The TDRB will hold a site visit on April 25 at 7:00 pm to view a 6 second interval. Mr. Scheu is very concerned that the sign will not meet the letter of the law.

Mr. Segal suggested a letter be written to the TDRB noting the intent of the regulation as written, static means no motion. The Town Planner will write a memo addressing the issue.

V. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for May 3, 2017. Chair Miller will not be present.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Brands, AICP
Town/Village Planner