

PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes

October 13, 2016

Members Present: Sally Miller, Lowell Gray, Susan Boston, Jeff Bendis, Sam Segal, Keri Cole, Michael Pacht

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Janet Graham, Steve Cota, Leo Werner, Michael Brands

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The September 7, 2016 minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

III. PUBLIC HEARING

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.

This is the Planning Commission public hearing per State Statute Title 24 Chapter 117, Section 4441. All notices have been sent per State requirements.

The PC reviewed the proposed amendment.

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

There were no comments from the public, nor had any been received in the Planning and Zoning Office.

After discussion, Ms. Cole motioned with a second by Mr. Gray to approve the requested amendment as submitted. The motion passed with a 7-0 vote.

The Town Planner will schedule a public hearing with the Board of Trustees.

B. Leo Werner - Cheese Aging/Storage Facility

Mr. Werner, representing his son who is the cheese maker at Plymouth Cheese Factory, is searching for a location for their cheese aging and storage facility along Route 4. The facility needs a loading dock and large truck access. An undeveloped 2.5 acre site located between the Lincoln Covered Inn and the Woodstock True Value has been selected. The owner of the property, a local dairy farmer, is willing to offer a long term lease (+/-50 years) and allow a 14,000 (100' x 140') square foot building to be built on-site.

Mr. Werner has spoken with Springbrook Farm and other local cheese makers which have expressed interest in storing and aging cheese on-site.

The facility would be constructed to resemble a barn with board on board siding. The building would be super insulated, meeting LEED standards with minimum energy use.

Additional activities could include a summer dairy bar serving ice cream, an educational component for schools and visitors, and a meeting site for the Vermont Cheese Council. There would be no restaurant use.

Cheese making of hand pulled mozzarella, which does not require aging, is envisioned.

MIT just bought a 250 acre farm in Pomfret. The intent is to do dairy and local food research. They have expressed interest in the cheese storage potential.

There would be no disposal issues, as the whey would be handled in Plymouth which has a State permit for whey discharge.

There would be 3-5 workers on-site. Product would arrive in small trucks and exit in large trucks (tractor trailers).

A zoning map change is required to allow the use on the selected site. The property to the west is zoned Business Service / Light Industrial and the property to the east is zoned Commercial / Light Industrial. The difference is that retail is allowed in the C/LI district.

It was suggested that agriculture related retail could be added to the BS/LI regulations. The term would require a definition. The retail portion would be a very minor portion of the proposed use. After discussion, the PC agreed a 5% or 1000 square foot area could be permitted.

The Town Planner noted a map of the site would be necessary to determine the exact dimensions and location of the proposed zoning map change.

The Town Planner will draft a set of regulations for discussion. They will be emailed to the PC for discussion. The PC will do a final review at the November meeting. This would allow for a December PC Public Hearing with hearing/adoption by the Select Board possible in January. The owner would like to start construction early spring.

E. Town Zoning Rewrite

The Town Planner invited the TDRB to the October 13, 2016 PC meeting to discuss proposed changes to the Town Zoning Regulations. A list had been sent to the TDRB with intent to review at the September 27, 2016 meeting, but time did not allow discussion. There were no TDRB members present, the discussion will be continued to the November 2, 2016 PC meeting.

The Town Planner noted that two types of signs (agricultural signs for vegetable stands and off-premise non-profit signs) are not covered in the Town Zoning Regulations which makes them illegal. The State's agricultural exemptions do not cover signage, a number of small family run vegetable stands have been using signage over the course of the summer. Non-profit organizations have been placing signs throughout the town without permit. There is no time period or size of sign defined. Technically the signs are not allowed, but are very common and need discussion. The PC will discuss the issue at the November meeting.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Gerrish - Act 250

The Act 250 permit for the removal of the Stone House at the Gerrish East End property expires December 1, 2016. The lawyer for Gerrish has applied for a second extension. A one year extension had been granted last year.

The agreement requires the owner of the property to pay \$50,000 to the State's Historic Preservation office to be used to rewrite the Village of Woodstock's Historic District survey. A second part was for the owner to acquire a Design Review permit to remove the building. Neither of these items has been accomplished.

It was unknown who is responsible for the \$50,000 payment or if the payment is considered null and void should the extension not be granted. The Town Planner will contact the Historic Preservation Office and the Act 250 staff to obtain additional information.

Is there a need to increase the \$50,000, as the survey rewrite may cost more now than when the cost was originally established. The PC also mentioned the need to brace the walls of the Stone House to prevent additional damage to the structure. Unfortunately, the roof has already caved in.

It was noted the PC does have party status in the matter, and therefore should issue an opinion on the extension.

Mr. Gray motioned, with a second by Mr. Segal, to not approve an extension without revisiting the conditions. There was no vote on the motion. After additional discussion, the motion was tabled to the November meeting with a 7-0 vote.

Planning Commission

October 13, 2016

Page 4

The PC agreed to wait for additional information and will decide the issue at the November meeting.

V. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for November 2, 2016.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Brands, AICP
Town/Village Planner