

PLANNING COMMISSION
Draft Minutes
January 6, 2016

Members Present: Sally Miller, Susan Boston, Keri Cole, Sam Segal
Members Absent: Nick Scheu, Two Vacancies
Others Present: Lowell Gray, Michael Brands

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the December 2, 2015 meeting were approved as submitted.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review 2015 State Model Stormwater Bylaws

The Town Planner emailed the 2015 State Model Stormwater Bylaws to the PC last week. The model is completely rewritten from the 2010 version on which Article 600 Stormwater of the Town Zoning Regulations were based

The 2015 model has a two page list of definitions. The model enhances the discussion of rain gardens and other low impact development devices. A new item is the discussion of compressed soils. During the construction process, constant driving or use of heavy equipment over an area creates an impervious layer. The model requests applicants to consider the construction process in their delineation of pervious and impervious soils.

The PC asked to have more time to study the document. The task is to focus on areas of the current stormwater regulations that may need an update versus a whole scale change.

B. Town Zoning Regulations Rewrite

The PC discussed which sections of the Town Zoning Regulations are in need of amendment.

Chair Miller asked about changes to Section 530 Waiver to Setbacks. The TDRB prefers the addition of criteria to enable a more thorough review. At the previous PC meeting, reference to the actual need of the waiver was mentioned. Building into the setback could be allowed only if the applicant is able to prove there is no other option was suggested. The Town Planner asked the TDRB for additional criteria at their December 23rd meeting. They meet again on January 26th.

The Town Planner emailed a document reflecting changes to two sections, Ponds and Short Term Rentals. A new section on Reconsideration of Decisions was distributed.

The Town Planner suggested three changes for Section 524 Ponds and Pools. The first requires maximum water levels to be two feet below the dam/berm to prevent overflow of the water body. A second amendment ties pond construction to a proposed Stormwater standard that monitors annual storm events. The third change is to encourage dry hydrant placement where feasible

In discussing the proposed changes, the PC asked for the ability to have infinity ponds approved. Infinity ponds are those that are filled flush to the top of the dam/berm.

The Town Planner noted the capture and subsequent gradual release of excess stormwater is an issue with infinity ponds. The storage device, would be scaled to the pond size. This may require an engineer. The Town Planner suggested a Conditional Use review be established should one desire to construct an infinity pond. The Town Planner will draft additional language and send it ahead of the next meeting.

Section 525 Short Term Rentals was discussed. The Town Planner added three criteria to current section. The first called for full time residency. A second asked for proof of a State license to assure collection of rooms and meals tax. The third request was for proof of adequate insurance.

After a lengthy discussion, the amendment requiring full time residency was deleted. The Short Term Rental period was extended to 12 times a year with a minimum two night stay required. The PC asked to have the foliage exception rolled into a rewritten introduction section. The retention of a residential character was also deemed important for the intro. The Town Planner will draft a new intro and send it around for comment.

Section 820 Reconsideration/Rehearing is a totally new section. The TDRB requested that the criteria for a reconsideration of a TDRB decision be added to the Zoning Regulations. The criteria were adopted as part of the 2009 TDRB Bylaws. The criteria meet the standards established in the State Statutes Chapter 117 Section 4470 which permits reconsiderations. The PC reviewed the draft and approved it as submitted.

The Town Planner discussed the Riparian Buffer rewrite with Pete Fellows of the Regional Planning Commission. Mr. Fellows is part of a State committee that is drafting the River Corridor model regulations. The committee is finalizing the language but is not quite finished. Mr. Fellows indicated the final product should be finished by June.

It appears that three elements will be covered in the model. River Corridor criteria, Riparian Buffers and Flood Hazard regulations would be included. The inclusion of the FEMA Flood Hazard regulations makes it a difficult task as the Federal Government requires assurance that flood elements will be adequately regulated.

The Town Planner will continue discussions with Mr. Fellows. An option would be to amend the Riparian Buffer criteria in their current format and adopt the River Corridor elements at a later date. The Flood Hazard regulations, as written, do not require an update.

C. Wetland Amendment Public Hearing Update

The Town Planner noted the Select Board has scheduled a Public Hearing on January 19, 2015 for adoption of the proposed Wetland Amendments. The amendment would take effect 21 days after Select Board approval.

IV. OPEN DISCUSSION

A. Siting of Solar Facilities

The Town Planner informed the PC that the work of the State subcommittee on Solar Siting is not progressing very well and will not be as productive as was originally thought. However, a final report for representation to the legislature is to be completed by March, 2016. The Town Planner is hopeful some guidance will be offered by this report that will help in the writing of the Select Board's Solar Siting Ordinance.

IV. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for February 3, 2016 at 7:30 pm.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Brands, AICP
Town/Village Planner