

PLANNING COMMISSION
Draft Minutes
June 6, 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sally Miller, Sara Stadler, Eric Goldberg, Sam Segal, Jeff Bendis
MEMBERS ABSENT: Michael Pacht, Susan Boston
OTHERS PRESENT: Eden Piconi, Louis Piconi, Michael Brands

I. OPENING

Chair Miller opened the meeting at 7:30 pm.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the April 4, 2018 were approved as submitted.

III. OPEN DISCUSSION

A. Eden and Louis Piconi

Eden and Louis Piconi operate a 14 acre garlic and lavender farm called 5Birds Farm at 3300 Hartland Hill Road. The owners wish to have their Residential Five Acre property rezoned to allow integrated agriculture, similar to the recently adopted overlay zone for Woodstock Inn's Kellyway Farm located off of Route 106.

The Piconis wish to be able to have weddings and other gatherings at their 200 year old barn that was relocated to their property last fall. The barn is 2300 square feet. Although they feel they have a strong case to operate without local permits, they prefer to be compliant with local rules and regulations. A change in zoning to allow these events would help attract more families to the area and would enhance local business opportunities.

Mr. Bendis asked what type events would be held.

The Piconis would like to be able to rent out their barn. Vermont weddings are a big draw at the moment. They hope to tie the lavender and garlic products into the events. These type events should be allowed throughout the town and should not be restricted to inn operated facilities as the current regulations require.

The Town Planner shared a 5Bird Farm's brochure that advertises the type events the Piconis hope to hold. Similar information is available at their website, "5birdsfarm.com" The recently passed Farm Agriculture Bill #663 increases the type of activities allowed on farms, but does not include weddings. The law becomes effective July 1, 2018.

Chair Miller noted there are many standards listed in the recently passed Integrated Agriculture overlay zone. There are buffer distances stated for outdoor use and indoor use. The Piconis should review the regulation and make a determination as to how their proposed use would be allowed or not.

The Town's concerns are to prohibit negative impacts on a neighborhood's peace, quiet and privacy. Chief concerns are noise, traffic and lights.

Ms. Piconi identified 4 operating farms in South Woodstock and 4 more in the rest of Woodstock. The list includes some sugar makers as well.

Chair Miller stated when writing regulations, the PC needs to make them equitable for all residents and property owners.

Mr. Bendis noted that the distance requirements written in the Integrated Agriculture overlay zone are there to control noise, light and other potential annoyance issues. Integrated agriculture works at the Kellyway site as the event site is a good distance from all neighbors. Mr. Bendis suggested the Piconis look at the current regulations to see how their proposal fits and to write down what works and what doesn't.

The Town Planner mentioned that the shuttle requirement for guests/clients is an important component of the regulation as it minimizes traffic impacts on the property and the surrounding neighborhood.. It also reduces the amount of on-site parking required.

Ms. Piconi agreed with the concept, noting their property is located very close to the village making shuttle service very practical.

Ms. Miller asked if the PC could have a list of the 8 farms identified by Ms. Piconi as it would be a good process to see how the proposed zoning change would effect the listed farms.

Mr. Segal asked the Piconis to prepare a site plan of their property noting event related areas, as this would be very helpful in understanding their request.

OTHER BUSINESS

A. VTRANS BIKE/PED GRANT

The Town Planner described a potential VTRANS Bike/Ped Grant application which was recommended by the Conservation Commission. The State would provide 80% funding with the municipality obligated to a 20% match. The process is to fund bike or pedestrian related projects which are commuter related. The East End bike ped path is considered recreational and not commuter based, therefore is ineligible. The application is due June 22.

The first application is considered a construction project, although there is no actual construction. Width lane for low speed roads can be reduced to 10' leaving the remaining roadway available for a shoulder/bike zone. This would be achieved by painting fog lines on Route 4 and relocating fog lines on Routes 12 and 106.

A site map of the Village showed the four main entrances to the Village. If lane width is reduced to 10', a 4' shoulder on each side of the road could be established on Route 4 East

and West entrances. The 25' wide Route 12 entrance could produce 2.5' wide shoulders and the 24' wide Route 16 entrance could have a 2' shoulder. Along the east Route 4 entrance a fog stripe is proposed from the Village line to the West exit of Maxham Meadow Way. Along the west Route 4 entrance a fog stripe is proposed from the Village line to College Hill Street. Along the north Route 12 entrance a fog stripe is proposed from the Village line to the Elm Street bridge. Along the south Route 106 entrance a fog stripe is proposed from Village line to Linden Hill Street. Beyond these points there is on street parking which would not be compatible with a fogline stripe. The narrower lanes would also serve as a general speed reduction for motorists entering the Village.

A secondary element of the application would be to apply “sharrows” to two well used cycling roads, River Road and Pomfret Road. A “sharrow” is a painted-on logo composed of a directional arrow and a bicycle outline approximately 4' x 8' in size. A “sharrow” is planned at the beginning of each road, two per road. The “sharrow” would be placed just after Cloudland Road on River Road where the pavement ends. On Pomfret road a “sharrow” would be placed just inside the town line heading south and just off of Route 12 heading north.

A separate application would be for a scoping project to place a sidewalk from the Pizza Chef sidewalk to Worthy Kitchen. A scoping project is a preliminary study and would not cover design or construction costs. There has been considerable community buzz to create the connecting sidewalk.

Total costs for the projects are not yet finalized. Town Planner is working with TRORC Rita Seto and VTRANS Jon Kaplan on potential funding totals.

After discussion, the PC agreed the proposed applications should be pursued.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Energy Chapter Rewrite

The Town Planner stated that TRORC has asked that the PC present a draft of their Enhanced Energy Chapter to the Selectboard and Board of Trustees. The presentation does not have to be for adoption purposes and could be considered updating the two boards as to progress thus far taken.

The PC wished to resolve the view shed analysis portion of the chapter. There are no view shed regulations written yet, and how would they be applied once written. Would the PSB allow an additional level of local review in the application process?

The Town Planner noted the document is to be viewed as a draft or unfinished working document. It would be shared with the Selectboard as an update in the writing process.

Mr. Segal suggested solar farms and other alternative energy facilities be allowed around institutions and farms. In western Vermont there appear to be many solar farms placed in this manner.

Ms. Stadler felt the land behind the Blake Hill Condominiums could be a good place for a solar farm although owned by the Woodstock Resort Corporation. It is well screened with a significant power line running through.

Mr. Bendis distributed and discussed a document noting 4 definitions: View shed, Ridgeline, Setback, and Access.

Chair Miller felt most applications should be determined by local review via, view shed analysis, unless there are some major limiters such as wetlands, floodways, etc.

Mr. Segal noted size of facility is important. Most residents find the size of the WAC solar panels on Route 12 to be okay visually. However, people tend to limit their support with larger sized facilities.

Mr. Goldberg suggested the PC should encourage 10 acre sites that are not visible, and maybe allow smaller sites that may be more visible such as the WAC.

The Town Planner noted screening could be used to soften the visibility of the facilities.

Mr. Segal would allow panels adjacent to Routes 4, 12, and 106, the main corridors, with a viewshed regulation review. The smaller solar farms should be embraced by the community and not totally hidden from site. He asked the PC, where would a smaller solar farm, similar to WAC's, be offensive as one entered Woodstock.

Chair Miller felt the Ottawaquechee River valley as one begins to enter the Village from the east would be problematic. This is an idyllic valley view that should be maintained.

The Town Planner will draft a comment section for the Selectboard presentation.

B. Village Zoning Rewrite

There was no time available to discuss the Village Zoning rewrite.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Health Care Study

Ms. Stadler reported on the Health Care Study. There will be a meeting on July 24, 2018 at the Senior Center.

VI. NEXT MEETING

The next regularly scheduled meeting is July 4, 2018, which will need to be changed.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Brands, AICP
Town/Village Planner