

# Woodstock, Vermont

*The Shire Town of Windsor County*

TOWN - VILLAGE MANAGER GOVERNMENT

Town Hall • P.O. Box 488 • Woodstock, Vermont 05091 • 802/457-3456

## PLANNING COMMISSION

### Draft Minutes

July 10, 2018

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

### I. OPENING

Chair Miller opened the meeting at 7:30 pm.

### II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the June 6, 2018 were approved as submitted.

### III. OPEN DISCUSSION

#### A. Peter Vollers

Mr. Vollers, attorney for Pritam Singh, asked for an informal discussion of a proposed zoning change. Mr. Singh recently obtained an option to purchase the Laurie Livingston 4587 South Road property in South Woodstock.

The property is currently zoned Residential Low Density (RLD). Mr. Singh would like to rezone the parcel Business Service / Light Industrial (BS/LI) to allow a potters studio and similar artists on site. Two abutting properties are also zoned BS/LI: the Kedron Valley Garage to the east and the old gravel pit site to the south. The neighbor directly west is a B&B and is zoned RLD.

A hearing with the Planning Commission is scheduled for August 1, 2018 at which time the formal application will be heard. Mr. Vollers is unable to attend the August meeting.

Mr. Singh, owner of the South Woodstock Country Store and the Kedron Valley Inn, is buying numerous properties in South Woodstock and wishes to change zoning on a number of them. The current application is only for 4587 South Road.

Chair Miller suggested that it would be better to discuss all proposed zoning changes to see how each relates to the other and the current zoning.

The Town Planner felt a PC meeting in South Woodstock would be good to get a better understanding of the communities' needs and goals.

#### B. Eden and Louis Piconi

Ms. Piconi continued the discussion concerning her garlic and lavender 5 Birds Farm located 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 Kelly Way Farm located off of Route 106.

Ms. Piconi distributed a packet of materials supporting her request to change zoning. Although she is primarily concerned with her own property, she also wishes to change the regulations for all farmers in Woodstock.

The Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) was included. The State Department of Agriculture uses these standards to determine what a farm is. Ms. Piconi noted the Ag Department made a June 15, 2018 determination that 5 Birds is a farm based on the information she provided them. She added her farm is one of the smallest fits.

The farm is 1.1 mile out of the Village, up Hartland Hill Road. This makes it easy for clients to stay in the Village yet partake in 5 Bird Farm's activities, such as weddings.

Mr. Bendis asked how much land was used for each crop.

Ms. Piconi noted garlic and lavender are planted in the same small plot on the property. They hope to hay the fields and will start up a sugar maple facility. Manure is brought in from Farmstead Cheese Farm in South Woodstock for the hay fields.

Chair Miller stated numerous changes need to be made to the Integrated Agriculture regulations and asked Ms. Piconi how her review of the current regulations mesh with her proposed use.

Ms. Piconi received letters of support from two neighbors, Ms. Pickett, owner of a proposed Short Term Rental and Ms. Inglis. Both neighbors support her proposed use.

The closest property owner, 743' from the barn, is Jay Morgan. She was unable to speak to Mr. Morgan.

Current regulations note a 1000' buffer for weddings and outdoor activities.

Ms. Piconi stated the weddings would be held in the barn. She questioned the hours of operation, indicating a later hour, than that stated in the regulation, would work better for her.

Mr. Pacht questioned when is an event determined to be inside or outside, as guests will wander in and out of the barn during the course of the event.

Chair Miller asked for a list of other farms that may want to participate in Integrated Agriculture, as the list was not included in the packet of materials.

Mr. Bendis asked that she review each standard to see if that would work for her and what would need to be changed.

If a new regulation is written, it would require removing the connection to an inn.

Mr. Malik felt the integrated agriculture zoning as written is very restrictive. The initial intent is for it to apply to all farms.

The PC needs to see how the regulations fits other farmers. What is a legitimate farmer? Is this based on money made off of agricultural products produced on site, number of acres, and number of years in business, etc.?

Ms. Piconi felt the town needs innovative young people to create businesses that will draw both consumers and families to the area. She would like to be able to open for business as soon as possible.

The Town Planner asked how many events Ms. Piconi would need to do per year. This could be divided into large events or small events.

Ms. Piconi responded that 20 events per year would work for her.

The Town Planner noted this would be one event each weekend of the summer, as the barn is not insulated. The key issue is the impact to the neighborhood.

Ms. Piconi stated weddings are her main request. Weddings bring in a large array of economic benefits, from rooms to food service. She agreed to the idea of shuttle service for participants as she is close to the Village.

The Town Planner stated specific numbers are needed to write a regulation. How many events, how many participants, hours of operation etc. need to be determined.

Mr. Pacht noted a definition of farming needs to be included. Mr. Segal agreed.

Parking was questioned and discussed.

Ms. Piconi noted she has had over 100 guests for private functions and they park everywhere. For barn events she plans to have parking behind the barn. She did not mention how many spaces. There is no need for screening as the barn is at the top of the hill and invisible except for the cupola from Hartland Hill Road.

Ms. Piconi left the meeting.

The PC listed a few other working farms: Bassett, Debevoise, MacDonald, Krawczyk, Tina Barr, McCuaig, etc. A full list will be necessary to determine various impacts to the each farming neighborhoods.

The PC asked to have Ben Pauly of Kelly Way Gardens come to discuss how the regulation is working and not working for his facility.

The Town Planner will draw up a list of Woodstock farmers for the next meeting.

Ms. Piconi left the meeting.

The PC continued to discuss possible changes to the Integrated Agriculture Regulations. Some but how much retail should be allowed? One way of assuring compliance is to have permittees file year end reports on both their agricultural and event activities. Permits would be good for current owner only. How long does a farm need to be a farm before applying for an integrated agriculture permit. Traffic capacity of a road - 200% of current levels, 150% of current levels, do a per event - 100 cars max.

There needs to be an open meeting on the subject to gage the public's opinion.

Town Planner will call Hinesburg and Shelburne Town Planners to see how their regulations have been working. What works and what needs to be changed.

**IV. OTHER BUSINESS**

**A. Housing Study**

Chair Miller noted the EDC funded housing study is about to be released. Hopefully, there will be strong data on which to base informed decisions.

Mr. Segal warned about interpreting data that may appear against the allowance of Short Term Rentals. STRs are a strong economic component that allow visitors an affordable way to come to Woodstock and a means of home owners to afford living here.

The Town Planner floated the idea that only residentially occupied homes could apply for a STR. A number of homes are strictly being used as standalone STRs. This is more prevalent in the Residential Five Acre zone where STRs are exempt from zoning permits. A third of the homes in the Town found on the STR websites are in the R5 zone.

**V. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Village Zoning Rewrite**

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

**B. Energy Chapter Rewrite**

There was no time available to discuss the Town Plan Energy Chapter rewrite.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Health and Human Services**

Mr. Bendis noted he has finished a draft of the Health and Human Services Chapter of the Town Plan. The section is 8 pages long without the Action Section, which is to be worked on later. Mr. Bendis asked for comment and will send to the Town Planner for distribution.

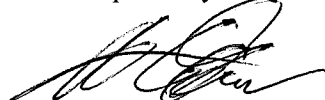
**VII. NEXT MEETING**

The next regularly scheduled meeting is August 1, 2018.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael Brands, AICP  
Town/Village Planner