



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

September 5, 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sally Miller, Susan Boston, Sam Segal, Eric Goldberg, Michael Pacht
MEMBERS ABSENT: One Vacancy, Sara Stadler
OTHERS PRESENT: Ann Johnston, Nicole Sutherland, Simran Johnston, Pritam Singh, Paul C. Kendall, Charles Humpstone, Beverly Humpstone, Jill Davies, Michael Brands

I. OPENING

Chair Miller opened the meeting at 7:30 pm.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the August 1, 2018 and August 23, 2018 were approved with minor changes.

III. PUBLIC HEARING

A. T-4844-18 4411 Church Hill Road, LLC

The application is for Zoning Amendment to Town Zoning Map to rezone 4411 Church Hill Road from Residential Low Density to Inn.

Owners, Ms. Johnson and Mr. Singh, presented the application.

The PC reviewed a map of the property showing the proposed zone area.

The proposed area of change would be the lower 1.17 acre portion of a 4.05 acre parcel of land. The lower section contains a school house. The upper 2.88 acre portion is an open undeveloped field. The owners wish to keep the field as is. The intent is to use the school house as an auxiliary use for the Kedron Valley Inn which they also own. The school house is located directly across the road from the associated inn.

The upstairs of the school house is an apartment. It was used as an apartment for the school librarian in the 1800s. The owners wish to continue the apartment rental.

The downstairs, main floor, is essentially two large rooms. This space would be used for



art classes, art exhibits, music events, conference rooms, yoga center, lectures and small weddings. This lower space works well for events but not for living quarters.

The stairs to the apartment are quite steep and not amenable use by the general public.

The intent is to have most events open to the public, although the events would cater to the Kedron Valley Inn guests.

Mr. Pacht asked how does the zoning request meet Section 313.E.1. Standards, which require a 3 acre parcel. Wouldn't this create nonconforming zoning?

The Town Planner stated there is no intent or desire to have a stand-a-lone inn on this property. By keeping the zoned area less than 3 acres, this prevents one from creating a stand-a-lone inn as the request would not meet the minimum area standards.

Mr. Singh agreed he does not want a stand-a-lone inn on this property.

The issue of creating a non-conforming lot was discussed at length.

Chair Miller noted the Village Zoning Regulations (VZR) were amended in 2014 to create a similar situation with property owned by the Woodstock Inn. There was no desire to create a stand-a-lone inn on any of the seven rezoned parcels. The inn asked to be able to use the properties for various auxiliary events tied to the inn. An Inn Annex regulation was created to allow this.

Ms. Humpstone asked about parking, she would not want attendees to park along the town road.

Mr. Singh would request that vehicles park at the inn property for the most part and then walk over to the school house facility.

The Town Planner noted the parking regulations prohibit on street parking. During the Conditional Use and Site Plan review, required for the proposed uses, the parking would be discussed in more detail.

The PC reviewed the Inn Annex regulations contained within the VZR to see how they could work for the present application. The definition would remain the same. An Inn Annex use would be added to the list of allowed uses in TZR Section 314 Inn. The general requirements subsection would be rewritten to allow the current request.

The Town Planner will draft the required VSA Title 24 Chapter 117 §4441 report based on tonight's comments.

After additional discussion, Mr. Pacht motioned with a second by Ms. Boston to recommend approval and transfer the request onto the Select Board. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Vermont Planning Grant Application

Chair Miller noted the Economic Development Committee is submitting an application for a Vermont Planning Grant. The \$20,000 request would bring the 2000 Woodstock River Walk Plan back to life. The intent is to place recreational walking paths heading east along the river starting near the Village's East End Park and returning via the old railroad bed.

The 2000 plan prepared by Robert White included an option for a bridge across the river to create a loop back to the Village via Old River Road. The plan contained detailed step by step construction instructions. The plan was not initiated as the major landowner, the Woodstock Resort Corporation, got cold feet and stopped the project. The landowner is now willing to participate.

The application is due by October 1, 2018 and requires both Planning Commission and Select Board approvals. There is a local 20% match that would be provided from the EDC's 1% fund.

The EDC has been very supportive of the East End recreational trail system. They had hoped to submit an application for the Vermont Bike/Ped Grant, available earlier this year. Due to the recreational component the trail did not qualify for that particular grant.

Both Mr. Segal and Mr. Goldberg suggested that a design study of a trail/path between the Woodstock Elementary and Middle/High Schools be added to the grant request. This trail is more important to the local communities and is one with a long history of need.

The original route between the schools was studied in 1975 and again in 2003.

Chair Miller explained that the due date is fast approaching leaving little time to create an adequate application for the school route. The East End pathway would be essentially an update of an outdated plan. The long history of searching for an appropriate path between the schools has shown it to be a very difficult and complex problem. A standalone path would be very expensive to build.

The East End path has one major landowner to deal with. The school path would have numerous landowners involved each of which would have to sign off for easements.

After a lengthy discussion, the PC agreed to support the proposal.

A motion by Ms. Boston with a second by Mr. Pacht moved to support the application for the Riverwalk Recreation path with strong encouragement to add a study of the connecting pathway between the Elementary and Middle/High Schools. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.

Mr. Segal suggested a comprehensive bicycle strategy should be done for the whole town.

The Town Planner mentioned a discussion with Dail Frates, Britton Lane, who offered an easement across her property for a bike path from the East End to Taftsville. The route would follow the old route 4 roadway which is now ends at Butternut Lane in Taftsville.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Integrated Agriculture

The PC reviewed the September 5, 2018 draft of the Integrated Agricultural regulations which were based on a draft submitted by Mr. Segal at the August 1, 2018 meeting. A letter had also been sent from Howard Krum, owner of the old apple farm and original ski tow site on Route 12.

The Town Planner informed the PC of enforcement action that has been started concerning wedding events held this August at the Piconi barn on Hartland Hill Road. The Piconis initiated the rewriting of the regulations back in June of this year to allow weddings and other events in their barn. Two large wedding events (+/- 200 participants each) occurred on August 11 and 25.

After a generic discussion of the issue, the PC did a line-by-line review of the proposed regulation.

The limit should be no more than 150 persons per event, with large events (+45 persons) restricted to 6 times a year.

Should musical events be allowed? Mr. Krum requested this in his letter. The attendance could be controlled by issuing a limited number of tickets.

A key issue is that noise limits need to be sufficient for the neighborhood. Although the Woodstock Inn's weddings are limited to 70dbs, it is located in the noisier Village area and not in the quiet typical of a wooded setting in the country.

Mr. Pacht supported notification of the Town and the neighbors before large events or ones containing amplified music.

The Town Planner suggested the police as well should be notified.

A license fee specific to these events could be established. Additionally, a bond could be secured to assure compliance. Non-compliance would mean forfeiture of bond.

Large events or musical events could be forced to pay for a third party monitoring of noise levels, using a process similar to the Woodstock Inn wedding events. Whatever is written needs to be enforced and enforceable.

Mr. Segal asked what is it we are trying to encourage by allowing the weddings and similar events.

The line-byline review started.

Second sentence in "Purpose" was changed to remove "their" and add "farm" after "existing". Under "A" in first sentence, "or parcels" was removed.

In "D.7", first sentence was removed. In second sentence "of other events" was removed and replaced with "shall not begin before 1:00 pm".

In "D.8", "(The associated Inn or downtown Woodstock)" was removed.

A new "D.10" was added, "Neighbors within a 1000' of events with over 100 participants and/or amplified music shall be notified by mail one week before said event. Additionally a person/firm from the Town's recommended list of sound verification specialists shall be hired to monitor sound levels during the events."

"D.10" becomes "D.11". In the first sentence "every January" is replaced with "by January 31st of each year".

"D.12" is added, "Initial permit is valid for one year only as a probationary period. A new conditional use permit would be required after the first year. Permits are non-transferable and are only valid for the original applicant".

The Town Planner will update the draft and send it around to members for comment before the next meeting.

B. Village Zoning Rewrite - Not done due to lack of time.

C. Energy Chapter Rewrite - Not done due to lack of time.

VI OTHER BUSINESS

VII. NEXT MEETING

The next regularly scheduled meeting is September 5, 2018.

Chair Miller asked for a special meeting to enable work on the Village Zoning rewrite and the Energy Chapter. Monday September 24, 2018 was selected.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Brands, AICP
Town/Village Planner