

**WOODSTOCK PLANNING COMMISSION  
WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL  
31 THE GREEN  
Wednesday, January 15, 2020  
Special Meeting  
DRAFT MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Sally Miller, Sam Segal, Ben Jervey, Eric Goldberg, Sara Stadler  
**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Susan Boston, Michael Pacht  
**OTHERS PRESENT:** Chris Lang, Eric Lang, Susan Fuller, Jason Drebitko, Tom O'Brien, Jennifer Raymond, Doug Raymond

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 7:30PM.  
The meeting was recorded.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of December 4, 2019 were approved with minor changes. The approval of the September 18, 2019 minutes was continued awaiting a rewrite for more detail.

**III. PUBLIC HEARING**

**A. To Amend Town Zoning Regulations-Section 103- Definitions & Section 809- Site Plan Review**

The hearing was continued from the December 4, 2019 meeting to change the wording of that offered by Attorney David Grayck as follows:

*Add to Section 103 Definitions:*

*"Accessory on-farm business" shall have the same meaning as in 24 V.S.A. § 4412(11), and as it may be amended.*

*Section 809 Site Plan Approval:*

*B. No zoning permit shall be issued by the Administrative Officer for an Accessory on-farm business until the TDRB issues site plan approval. In undertaking its site plan review of an Accessory on-farm business, the TDRB shall not deny the application, nor shall the TDRB decision have the effect of prohibiting the Accessory on-farm business. In issuing site plan approval, the*

*TDRB may set reasonable conditions and requirements as are allowed under the standards and requirements for site plan approval.*

*C. No zoning permit shall be issued by the Administrative Officer for those activities of an Accessory on-farm business which are not exempt under 24 V.S.A. § 4413 unless site plan approval has been granted by the TDRB in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 4416 and this Bylaw.*

The Sub-Section letters need to be changed to line up with the current regulation (from B. to F. & C. to G.).

After additional discussion, Mr. Segal motioned with a second by Ms. Stadler to approve the language as written and to pass it on to the Select Board for Public Hearing per Title 24 Chapter 117 Section 4442.

The **MOTION** passed with a 5-0 vote.

#### **IV. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **A. Discussion of Amendment to Town Zoning Regulations - Rural Retreats**

The Town Planner sent the PC the January 15, 2020 version of the Rural Retreat zoning regulations. The changes were made based on PC requests at the December 4, 2019 meeting.

Additionally, three emails from Stacey Gerrish were sent, which noted her concerns with the regulation as drafted.

Chair Miller noted issues with potential traffic impacts on rural roads.

Chris Lang, local realtor, thought it was odd that only very large landowners (+150 acres) were allowed this use. A major issue is the potential negative impact on residential properties. Current use impacts need to be assessed as well. The commercial use may conflict with the intent of current use and make the properties ineligible.

Chair Miller asked for input from the Town Planner on current use impacts.

Mr. Goldberg felt it was an issue for the landowner to resolve.

Ms. Fuller asked about home retreat versus rural retreat.

Chair Miller stated that it appears to be an error as the home retreat was used in earlier drafts.

Tents or RV's popping up in a field during an event may be an issue for neighbors.

Mr. Segal felt no amplified music should be allowed across the board.

A person, currently enrolled in current use, spoke on the issue. He removed 4 acres for a home site. A removal fee is required, how does a commercial use impact this. An Act 250 permit may be needed for the commercial use.

Chair Miller asked about existing structures versus additional square footage being added for the proposed event space. For example, if a large banquet hall were built.

The music barn/theater in Pomfret was brought up as an example. Who controls aesthetics? In its current location it works, on an isolated dirt road it may not.

Chair Miller clarified that she is playing devil's advocate to address all potential issues.

Mr. Segal did not see an issue if one is located way out in the country. There is no Design Review in place in these locations. Is the issue mainly a commercial impact? The owner is allowed to build an ugly building if they wish. How can one be regulated to only use of an existing structure?

Chair Miller stated other areas of the regulations note a date to identify an existing structure. She read the Home Enterprise section as an example. Historic Barns is another section with a reference to existing structure.

Mr. Goldberg stated there are character issues established at the beginning of the regulation.

Ms. Fuller felt a structure may be needed that doesn't exist to support the proposed business.

Mr. O'Brien noted a farm across the street from him has been adding barn structures as part of their farming business. If a business is to be successful it may need additional structures. The isolation of the sites should protect neighbors from negative impacts.

Chair Miller felt nice buildings are not a problem, however a too commercial looking building such as a metal "Butler" building (corrugated steel) would be ugly.

Ms. Stadler suggested allowing buildings that reflect the rural character.

Chair Miller stated protecting rural character is the important item to maintain.

Mr. Segal noted different folks have different tastes especially when it comes to aesthetics.

Mr. Jervy asked who would view these buildings as they all appear isolated due to the large acreage requirement.

Farm and forestry impacts are protected from neighborhood concerns by the State's right to farm laws. Tractors and chainsaw noise are allowed and accepted as part of the use.

Additional commercial noise and use impacts are not so protected and can be regulated by local bodies.

Chair Miller stated it is better to write a new regulation stronger at first and then as time goes on ease off once all circumstances are known. The integrated agriculture section was written in this manner.

Ms. Fuller asked why closing times are earlier during the week than during the weekend.

Mr. Jervy felt decibel limits are a big tool to control late night activity.

Mr. Segal felt the issue could be resolved with various classifications or levels of activities. Less impactful events could have more expanded hours.

The discussion was closed until the March meeting.

## **V. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Village Zoning Rewrite**

A schedule for the Village Zoning needs to be drafted to note when specific sections would be reviewed. The public requested this. Next PC meeting to address this would be in March.

### **B. Town Plan-Education Chapter**

Mr. Goldberg sent around a draft of the education chapter and gave a brief update on the rewrite.

The PC should ask the school board for more details in their plan of action. An education expert should be hired to help the PC have a better understanding of the various issues.

The State Act 60 law was discussed as it impacts potential rebuild or major renovation of school buildings. The bill is totally unfair for “giving” towns like Woodstock. Woodstock needs to join other towns to get the law changed.

School Board should look at hiring outside experts to help the schools fund necessary building and program improvements.

All agreed the Education Chapter is way out of date and needs to be rewritten in total.

Ms. Stadler asked if the Select Board should be involved in the rewrite up front. She also noted they are very busy with many other items as well.

Mr. Drebitko noted the school is the main magnet for one looking to purchase a new home. Woodstock has many things going for it, NPS, restaurants, art galleries, outdoor rec, etc. but the school is the main draw for families.

Mr. Goldberg felt the current draft needs to be cleaned up and sent to the Selectboard. A fall back, funding wise, could be the Economic Development Commission.

Mr. Segal felt action items need to be drafted from the text. Action items need to be clear and specific. The PC's job is to draft the language.

Chair Miller noted the school board is working on the facility program which should be done within six months.

Mr. Segal was hopeful to have the chapter rewrite done before this.

Mr. Goldberg is looking at the issue from a town perspective and not the school board's view.

Mr. Jervis noted the PC has already met with the school board and involved officials. Now is the time to work on Mr. Goldberg's draft.

Mr. Goldberg stated concisely state the issues and concisely make recommendations. Everyone knows the history; the problems need to be illuminated.

Chair Miller stated the education plan will require TRORC review. We want to make sure it meets the standards required for adoption.

The document will be sent around for edits. The Town Planner would be the receiving party for comments.

Consider a Town Academy model similar to Burr and Burton and other schools in Vermont.

Mr. Goldberg suggested that an education expert should make the academy suggestion as an option.

Mr. Segal felt there are experts for specific issues but not one who could cover all the issues, educational programming, substance abuse and building. This is going to be an expensive venture.

Chair Miller noted the draft would require action items and a clean copy before a public hearing could be warned.

Mr. Segal moved with a second by Ms. Stadler to put this on the agenda as a solo item for the February meeting. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.

Town Planner joined the meeting at 9:10 pm. He stated the TRORC reviews the document after the Select Board approval.

An action plan should be drafted in the same manner as the other action programs in the Town Plan.

The PC agreed it would be near impossible to change Act 60 (the giving/receiving town scenario) as there are many more towns receiving than giving. Essentially Woodstock has to raise money to pass on to other towns in addition to the funds need to pay their own educational costs.

Chair Miller asked the Town Planner to review and comment on the Goldberg draft.

**VI. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Planning Commission will be February 5, 2020.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Brands, AICP  
Town Planner