

**WOODSTOCK PLANNING COMMISSION
WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL
31 THE GREEN
July 1, 2020**

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sally Miller, Sam Segal, Eric Goldberg, Sara Stadler

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ben Jerve, Susan Boston, One Vacancy

OTHERS PRESENT: Neal Leitner

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of May 6th and June 22nd, 2020 were approved as submitted.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion Instructional of Signage

Chair Miller opened the item to discussion. She summarized the intent of the topic as to the legality of not enforcing signage regulations in the town and village. She stated that this item goes beyond just instructional signage. She mentioned sandwich boards as an example, that they are not instructional, but should be allowed for now during this public health crisis. She mentioned that the Village Trustees allowed for sandwich board signs in the village until October 15th. She also noted that temporarily relaxing sign regulation enforcement could produce creative ideas that the Planning Commission could later codify if they chose to revisit the sign regulations.

Mary Riley, the chair of the Select Board, was in attendance. Chair Sally Miller asked Mary Riley if the Select Board has made any decisions in regard to signage in the town. Mary Riley responded that the Select Board has not made any decisions as of yet, and they are awaiting guidance or suggested wording from the Planning Commission so that the Select Board can adopt a resolution. Chair Miller mentioned one sandwich board that is in the street. While she thought allowing for sandwich boards right now is ok, they should not be traffic hazards. Sara Stadler concurred that sandwich boards should not be traffic hazards. The commission discussed the Chamber of Commerce's sign questionnaire, which Chair Miller distributed to the commission for their review prior to the meeting. She mentioned that sandwich boards were a hot issue when she first became a planning

commissioner and thought that a time frame should be considered so that the signs do not become permanent. Sam Segal agreed with the chair. She also mentioned that off-site signs should not be permitted. Sam Segal thought that there is a state regulation prohibiting off-site signage, so it might not be necessary to include language prohibiting off-site signage. Chair Sally mentioned existing prohibitions should be kept in place, while allowing for window signage and sandwich boards for example. Mary Riley reiterated that she would like some wording from the Planning Commission for the type of signage they would allow before the next Select Board meeting. The discussion moved to sandwich board regulations in the town. Chair Miller read the sandwich board regulations for the town in the Commercial/Light Industrial. The board thought the regulations permitting sandwich boards could be expanded to all non-residential zones. Chair Sally asked the commission if they would like to craft a statement to send to the Select Board. She asked the town planner to clarify what VLCT said in response to the inquiry about the legality of not enforcing signs regulations. He mentioned that it would be good to have a simple statement that the Select Board could adopt to provide some regulatory backing. Chair Miller asked if the commission would like to set a timeline ending on October 15th, which was like what the Village Trustees adopted.

Sam Segal mentioned it would be wise to list the prohibited uses in their statement. Chair Miller asked the town planner to write down a draft statement as the commission crafted it. She read off the list of prohibitions in the sign code. They are: Flashing or moving signs, internally illuminated or neon-type signs, signs which illuminate any part of a building, illumination of signs after 11:00P.M. and excessive illumination which constitutes a nuisance.

The commissioners discussed some way to be able to revisit or revise the resolution if the need arises. After the discussion ended, the draft language is as follows:

Until October 15th the sign regulations in the Village and Town will not be enforced except for the following prohibited uses; flashing or moving signs, internally illuminated or neon-type signs, signs which illuminate any part of a building, illumination of signs after 11:00P.M. and excessive illumination which constitutes a nuisance. Signs will not be required to go to the Village Design Review Board. The Planning Commission reserves the right to revisit the enforcement of sign regulations as necessary.

Chair Miller asked for a motion. Sam Segal motioned to adopt the language as written. Sara Stadler seconded the motion.

Motion approved 4-0.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Village Zoning Regulations – Discuss Rewrite Schedule

Chair Miller opened the item to the commission for discussion. She expressed her opinion that they should put a plan in place for how they are going to do this. She said that this time of uncertainty may not be the best of times to do a zoning rewrite. Rather than a total zoning rewrite, perhaps looking at critical topics only is the best method of approach. She elaborated that zoning change requests to allow for increased density have not been successful. She pondered that perhaps the Planning Commission focus their energy on other topics. The chair asked the commission for their thoughts. She mentioned that since the town planner is new, it could be wise to allow for some time so that he can get a better grasp on the zoning regulations and identify any glaring deficiencies. She noted the new historic survey, and whether the design review district boundaries should be changed to reflect the historic registry expansion. She thought perhaps zoning should address some of the historic district issues.

The town planner asked for a clarification that affects all the residential zones in the town and village. He said that the residential zones have minimum lot size requirements that vary by the number of dwelling units. The minimum lot area in residential zones under Land, Area, and Structural Requirements begins with X number of square feet per dwelling unit or two-family dwelling. It then increases for third dwelling units. Since the wording states “per dwelling unit or two-family dwelling”, and not “dwellings”, he asked if that means that just a duplex is allowed on the minimum lot size in any given zone, or if it the intent is to allow for two dwellings per lot such as a single family home with a separate dwelling somewhere else on the property. Chair Miller noted that a Vermont State Statute prohibits bylaws from excluding as a permitted use one accessory dwelling unit that is located on a lot with a single-family dwelling. She said the intent was to allow for a second unit detached or attached on the minimum lot size. She did note that there is a limit to the size of the second unit.

V. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Planning Commission is scheduled for August 5th 2020.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Neal Leitner
Town Planner*